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THE SELF-REVELATION OF  
OUR LORD



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# THE SELF-REVELATION OF OUR LORD

BY

J. C. V. DURELL, B.D.

RECTOR OF ROTHERHITHE  
LATE FELLOW OF CLARE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE  
AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORIC CHURCH"

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## PREFACE



WHAT is Christianity? Few theological books have been so widely canvassed in recent years as that in which Professor Harnack set himself to answer this question. To the present writer the answer given by this remarkable work seems completely inadequate. Up to a certain point it is fruitful and suggestive. Aspects of Christianity are insisted upon which are essential to any true understanding of the faith; but the conclusions arrived at are partial and incomplete. The view taken of the Person of Christ appears to rest upon a fatal misreading of the evidence upon which our opinion has to be formed.

The question as to what authorities are available for estimating the character of the teaching of Jesus Christ is thus answered by Professor Harnack: "Our authorities," he says, "for the message which Jesus Christ delivered are—apart from certain important statements made by Paul—the first three Gospels. Everything that we know, independently



of these Gospels, about Jesus' history and his teaching, may be easily put on a small sheet of paper, so little does it come to. In particular, the Fourth Gospel, which does not emanate or profess to emanate from the apostle John, cannot be taken as an historical authority in the ordinary meaning of the word. The author of it acted with sovereign freedom, transposed events and put them in a strange light, drew up the discourses himself, and illustrated great thoughts by imaginary situations. Although, therefore, his work is not altogether devoid of a real, if scarcely recognisable, traditional element, it can hardly make any claim to be considered an authority for Jesus' history; only little of what he says can be accepted, and that little with caution. On the other hand, it is an authority of the first rank for answering the question, What vivid views of Jesus' person, what kind of light and warmth, did the gospel disengage?"<sup>1</sup>

Our present study will show that although the writer differs from Professor Harnack upon the question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel, and thinks that the Professor has considerably overstated the unhistoric element in its composition, he is yet prepared to use the Gospel in very much the way that is indicated in this quotation. He does not lay stress upon the Gospel as a transcript of history, but he regards it as an interpretation of

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *What is Christianity?* Eng. trans. pp. 19 f.

history by one who was qualified to give a true interpretation.

Hence the premisses upon which the present study proceeds are not fundamentally different from those upon which Professor Harnack builds. Our data are much the same. But the difference in the mode of interpretation is fundamental, and our conclusions are wide apart.

For instance, Professor Harnack says that Jesus "desired no other belief in his person and no other attachment to it than is contained in the keeping of his commandments."<sup>1</sup> In the opinion of the present writer, this statement represents a rationalising tendency which is quite contrary to the essence of Christianity. It is an outcome of the desire to get rid of that element of mystery which, as Dr. Figgis has so well shown in his Hulsean Lectures, is inseparable from the Christian faith.<sup>2</sup> The Person of Christ stands at the centre of the religion which He has founded, a Personality unfathomable and mysterious and, by the very fact of its mystery, capable of satisfying human needs.

But Professor Harnack will not admit such an interpretation of the Person of Jesus. He says, once again, of Him that "the consciousness which he possessed of being the Son of God is nothing but the practical consequence of knowing God as

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 125, Eng. trans.

<sup>2</sup> *The Gospel and Human Needs*, chap. ii.

the Father and as his Father. Rightly understood, the name of Son means nothing but the knowledge of God." <sup>1</sup> It will be observed that the question here is not as to the meaning which was conveyed to the hearers by the words of Jesus, but as to the meaning which Sonship had for Jesus Himself. The present writer has tried to bring out clearly the distinction between the claims of Jesus as He Himself understood them, and the progressive apprehension of those claims by those who heard Him. It is admitted that during the Ministry only a partial conception of the meaning of the Divine Sonship of Jesus was reached by the disciples. But we contend that Professor Harnack is wrong in the position which he takes up when he virtually limits the true contents of the Self-revelation of Jesus to that which was apprehended by His hearers during the Ministry.

The aim of this study is to trace the progressive apprehension of the claims of Jesus by His disciples, and then to show that the interpretation of those claims which was given by the Apostolic band is true. It is maintained that the data upon which the first teachers of the gospel worked lead necessarily to the Catholic interpretation of the Nature and Person of Jesus.

The need for some such investigation as is here attempted would seem to be very great at the

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 128, Eng. trans.

present time. For the cry is so often raised that we must get back from the Christ of the Creeds to the Christ of the Gospels. There is a frequent demand for an undogmatic presentation of Christianity, which resolves itself ultimately into a mere code of ethics. And it is said that such a Christianity represents the teaching of the Jesus of the Gospels.

The present writer has fully admitted the facts that give colour to such statements as these. He has admitted that there was a very real limit placed upon the dogmatic teaching of Jesus during the Ministry, and he has pointed out how such a limitation was inevitable. But his aim has been to show that great and transcendent truths as to the Person of Jesus lay in the background throughout and were implicit in much that was said and done. These truths subsequently became explicit in the light of the Resurrection and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The gospel narrative, even as related by the Synoptists, is not so simple as may perhaps at first sight appear. It presents an enigma. And it is only in the Christ of the Creeds that this enigma can be solved. The only adequate interpretation of the Gospels is to be found in the Catholic faith.

It will be well to state shortly the assumptions upon which we have proceeded in regard to the authorship and composition of the books of the

New Testament. We have assumed that the Second and Third Gospels are the genuine work respectively of St. Mark and St. Luke. We have made no assumption at all as to the authorship of the First Gospel. It may be that St. Matthew was connected with the composition of some document that lies behind the First Gospel; the question, however, is a difficult one, and we are not now called upon to answer it. For our present purpose, it is sufficient for us to assume, as we have done, that the Gospel is to be dated shortly before the catastrophe of 70 A.D. For the sake of convenience, we have spoken of the author by the traditional name, St. Matthew; but this is not intended to suggest that the authorship is to be ascribed to the Apostle of that name.

With regard to the sources which lie behind the Synoptic Gospels, we accept the tradition which connects St. Mark's Gospel with the preaching of St. Peter. We accept also the theory that St. Matthew and St. Luke both used the Gospel of St. Mark, and that besides St. Mark they had access to another document, which embodied a separate tradition of incidents and teaching belonging to the Ministry of Jesus. A discussion as to the separate sources of the narratives of the Birth and Infancy is embodied in our examination of these narratives.

The position which we have taken up in regard to the authorship and composition of the Fourth



Gospel and of the Apocalypse will be stated in the body of this work, when we have these writings under consideration.

The genuineness of all the Epistles of St. Paul, including the Pastorals, is assumed. The anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews is dated shortly before the outbreak of the Jewish war in 67 A.D. The Lucan authorship of the Acts is assumed; and also the genuineness of the First Epistle of St. Peter.

J. C. V. DURELL.

*March 1910.*



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# THE SELF-REVELATION OF OUR LORD



## BOOK I

### CHAPTER I

#### FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY TO ST. PETER'S CONFESSION

THE Synoptic Gospels give us the story of our Lord's Ministry and Passion in the form in which that story was current in the earliest days of the Church among the first generation of believers. Other facts and other aspects of the gospel were treasured by individuals or circulated in limited circles. But the first public preaching of the gospel was in substance what we find in the Synoptic narrative.

We shall therefore do well to make this narrative the starting-point in our inquiry. It represents our Lord in contact with people drawn from very

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varied classes and of widely differing habits and traditions. There was the inner circle of His friends, including the Twelve. There was the larger band of disciples with a looser degree of attachment, such as the Seventy. There were those who were temporarily attracted either by His teaching, or by His mighty works, or by the hope of gain. There were the leaders of religion—scribes, Pharisees, lawyers, Sadducees, and officials of the synagogue. And lastly, there were the outcasts of society—tax-collectors, lepers, demoniacs, and sinners.

In what way was our Lord thought of by the varied classes which made up this motley crowd? What was their view of His Personality and His Work? Let us try to gather from the Synoptic narrative what opportunity was given them for forming an opinion. We shall have to examine the teaching of Jesus. But it will not be sufficient to analyse this teaching in itself. It will be necessary also to consider it further in connection with contemporary habits of thought and contemporary knowledge. For both words and events have a significance which stands in very close relation to the time to which they belong. In order to estimate the effect which the teaching and actions of Jesus would have upon His hearers, we must listen to those words, and view those actions, through the same medium as that which existed for

## THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY 3

the hearers themselves. We shall then be in a position to see, so far as the fragmentary character of the evidence allows, what impression our Lord designed to produce as to His Person and Work ; and we shall also see what was the impression that was actually formed by the disciples.

The earlier period of the Ministry finds a natural climax in the confession of St. Peter. Let us then deal with this period first.

What were the ideas, hopes, and beliefs in the minds of the disciples when they first heard and answered the call of Him who henceforward was to be their Master? The narrative of the Fourth Gospel represents some at least of the first disciples as having been under the influence of St. John the Baptist and as having listened to his teaching. There need be no difficulty in regarding this as genuine tradition. The fame of St. John the Baptist spread far and wide, and those whom Jesus chose as disciples would be the very men whose temperament and aspirations would be likely to make them turn to a preacher of righteousness such as the Baptist.

Hence the testimony of St. John the Baptist to Jesus would be the starting-point for their apprehension of the Person and Work of Jesus Himself. They would accept the estimate which the Baptist had formed of Jesus, and upon this as a foundation

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the teaching of Jesus would be able to build. Our initial inquiry, therefore, must be as to the testimony which was borne by the Baptist to Jesus.

St. John the Baptist regarded his own work as merely preliminary to the work of One greater than he, who would follow him. "There cometh after me He that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I baptized you with water; but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (Mk 1<sup>7</sup>). The thought here is of One who would inaugurate a mightier form of religion, endued with spiritual power: One who would stand, as it were, upon a higher plane, and whose work would differ from his own not merely in degree but also in kind.

Among those who came down to the Jordan to be baptized was Jesus Himself. Did the Baptist recognise Him as "the coming One," of whom he had spoken? The accounts are conflicting. The Marcan tradition gives no hint of any recognition: "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him: and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased" (Mk 1<sup>9-11</sup>). The vision was seen and the voice

from heaven was heard by Jesus ; but the Synoptists give no hint that these manifestations were given to any others, whether to the bystanders or to the Baptist himself. Indeed, the probable reading of the Matthean text clearly suggests a subjective effect upon Jesus Himself alone : " the heavens were opened unto Him " (Mt 3<sup>16</sup>. Note, however, that WH. omit *αὐτῷ*).

The impression we gather from the Synoptists is that the source of the narrative was Jesus Himself, for whom the vision and the voice had a profound significance. We may suppose that He related the story of this heavenly ratification of His Mission to the disciples at a later date, when they had reached such a point in their training as would enable them to understand its meaning.

But though the Marcan tradition gives no hint of any recognition of Jesus by the Baptist, we have a further source, which is drawn upon by St. Matthew and St. Luke, though used by them somewhat differently. It may be that St. Matthew derived from this source the statement which he makes that when Jesus came to be baptized, " John would have hindered Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me ? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now : for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness " (Mt 3<sup>14</sup>). There is no difficulty in accepting this addition to

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the narrative. Jesus was probably already known personally to His kinsman, and we may well suppose that an intuitive perception would reveal to the Baptist the fact that this was "the coming One" of whom he had spoken. A glance into the face of Jesus and the quick response of the heart might well arouse in him his prophetic instinct and lead to the knowledge of which St. Matthew speaks.

This, indeed, is inconsistent with the narrative of the Fourth Gospel, which states that there was no recognition of Jesus by the Baptist previously to the heavenly manifestations, and that these were the divinely appointed tokens by means of which the Baptist was led to recognise Jesus as Him who was to come. "I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, He said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon Him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit" (Jn 1<sup>33</sup>). Here the vision is given to John the Baptist himself, and is made the source of his knowledge of Jesus.

There are, however, indications that the Johanne narrative is lacking in historical perspective. For the character of the testimony here ascribed to the Baptist must be held, in all reasonable probability, to belong to a later date: "I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (Jn 1<sup>34</sup>). In ascribing to the Baptist the

use of such a title, the Evangelist appears to be anticipating a stage of thought which was only reached at a later date. We shall therefore do best to accept the Matthæan account of the Baptist's recognition of Jesus.

We conclude, then, that the Baptist recognised Jesus as "the coming One," to whom his own prophecies had pointed. This much at least is clear. But what further idea was involved in this belief? To what extent was Jesus regarded by him as coming in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies? Was He regarded as the Messiah?

The Synoptic narrative interprets the mission of the Baptist as the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah.

"Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face,  
Who shall prepare Thy way;  
The voice of one crying in the wilderness,  
Make ye ready the way of the Lord,  
Make His paths straight" (Mk 1<sup>2</sup> = Mt 3<sup>3</sup> = Lk 3<sup>4</sup>).

There is, however, no indication in the narrative that the Baptist himself thought of this prophecy in connection with his work. But the triple occurrence of the quotation shows that the earliest Christian tradition definitely regarded this prophecy as having been fulfilled by the mission of the Baptist. It is indeed quite possible that the connection may have been claimed originally by the Baptist himself, as is



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stated in the Fourth Gospel (Jn 1<sup>23</sup>) ; but, as against this, it may be noted that Jesus seems to be introducing a new idea when He connected this prophecy with the work of St. John the Baptist after the return of the Baptist's messengers to their master in his prison (Mt 11<sup>10</sup> = Lk 7<sup>27</sup>).

But whether the Baptist had this prophecy in his mind or not, we can hardly doubt that he thought of Jesus as the Messiah. The phrase "the coming One" points to One whose coming had been definitely announced and definitely expected. The Lucan statement that, as John was preaching, all mused in their hearts whether he himself were the Messiah (Lk 3<sup>15</sup>), shows the condition of expectancy which prevailed. And in this expectancy, though with fuller knowledge, the Baptist had his share.

He regarded Jesus as the Messiah. And his teaching shows what ideas he associated with Messiahship. There is to be a stern judgment upon sin and a vindication of righteousness. Messiah's kingdom indeed is to be a kingdom of the Spirit, but relentless war is to be waged against evil. There will be a baptism of fire as well as of the Spirit. The fan of judgment is in Messiah's hand, throughly to cleanse His threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into His garner ; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire (Lk 3<sup>16f.</sup> = Mt 3<sup>11f.</sup>). Yet it would seem that the Baptist's



view of the Messiah's work was limited and defective. Subsequently the public ministry of Jesus did not match the ideal in the mind of the Baptist. The news brought to him of the work and teaching of Jesus led him to question whether he had been mistaken. Was Jesus "the coming One," or were they still to expect another (Mt 11<sup>3</sup> = Lk 7<sup>19</sup>)? Probably the Baptist had not been able to free himself from the ideas of his time which had grown up around the conception of the Messiah. He probably expected the establishment of temporal sovereignty, the destruction of evil by the use of worldly force, and then the reign of righteousness under conditions of earthly sovereignty.

When, therefore, the first disciples attached themselves to Jesus, we may suppose that they brought with them the ideas and expectations which the Baptist had taught. They regarded Jesus as "the coming One," the Messiah.

But in point of fact there was very little to build on in this first belief with which the disciples approached Jesus. It could not be made the point of departure for fuller knowledge, because in itself, as understood by the disciples, it contained so much that was false. Jesus could not claim to be the Messiah without appearing to sanction the mass of false and worldly notions which had gathered around the Messianic hope. It was necessary for Him at the beginning to set aside the Messianic

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idea altogether. He would first by His spiritual teaching lead His disciples to understand the spiritual character of His Work and to look into the depths of His Personality. Afterwards, when spiritual apprehension had come, they could give Him a title under which they might express their new knowledge. Then, but not before, they might acknowledge Him to be the Christ.

Hence the only sure foothold which the disciples had taken over from the Baptist was their belief that He who was now their Master had come in some way to conquer sin and to set up a kingdom in righteousness. Let us see, then, by what means Jesus led them forward from this point to a fuller understanding of His Person and His Work.

It was necessary that He should describe Himself by some title which was not associated in popular usage with false ideas. He could not call Himself the Messiah for the reasons explained above. He chose to call Himself "The Son of man."

What, then, is the meaning which underlies this title? What suggestions would it convey as to the Person or Work of Jesus? To find the answer to this question, let us trace its use in the Old Testament.

The phrase is of frequent occurrence in the

Psalms and elsewhere. It is used as a poetic synonym for "man." It stands, not for an individual, but for "man" as such, the being who possesses all that belongs to human nature. The son of man is the possessor of manhood, with all that manhood implies. The synonym is clearly expressed in the 8th Psalm, after the manner of Hebrew parallelism—

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?  
 And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?  
 For Thou hast made him but little lower than God,  
 And crownest him with glory and honour.  
 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of  
 Thy hands;  
 Thou hast put all things under his feet:  
 All sheep and oxen,  
 Yea, and the beasts of the field;  
 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
 Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."  
 (Ps 84<sup>th</sup>).

In this passage two ideas stand out clearly side by side—the dignity and the dependence of man. On the one hand, he is endowed with qualities which raise him far above all other created beings—qualities of soul which lift him up towards God Himself, in whose image he is created. But on the other hand, he is dependent at every turn upon God. He can do nothing of himself. All that he is and all that he achieves he owes to God, who has deigned thus to dignify him. So the title

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“Son of man” implies a possession of all that is essential to human nature: it stands for man as God has endowed him; man, whose achievements seem so disproportionately great when considered in relation to his frailty and insignificance.

With the same thought the phrase is used in the Book of Ezekiel. It is the title by which the prophet is addressed by Jehovah, who thus prefaces the messages which Ezekiel is to deliver. Here indeed the title is addressed to an individual, but it implies that Ezekiel is addressed in virtue of his manhood. He is to speak as a man to men; to teach them what is expected of them in virtue of their manhood; to lead them to a true conception of the relation of man to God. So when Ezekiel receives the title “Son of man,” he is reminded of what, as a man, he ought to be. It is a call to realise the ideal of manhood, a reminder at once of weakness and of dignity.

Here, then, is the point of view from which Jesus chose this as the title under which He might best express the relation which He wished first to establish between Himself and His disciples. He desired to be thought of as the Son of man; not as a son of man among others, but as pre-eminently and uniquely the Son of man, sharing indeed the nature of others,

but standing apart from them as the exemplar and the type.

We may surely set aside as an incredible paradox the theory that Jesus never used the title "the Son of man" at all, and that its occurrence in our Greek Gospels is due to a misunderstanding of the Aramaic phrase which was actually used by Him. The whole argument is a piece of ingenious conjecture, based on an imperfect knowledge of the Aramaic dialects which were spoken in various parts of Syria at that time. The theory runs counter to all the direct evidence which we possess. It is impossible to imagine that the whole of the first generation of believers should have been totally mistaken in their belief that Jesus had constantly referred to Himself by a certain title, while all the time the supposed title was a figment of the imagination.

We need not hesitate to believe that Jesus throughout His Ministry spoke of Himself as the Son of man, and regarded this title as standing in intimate connection with His Person and Work. He is the Man in whom human nature finds its fullest and most perfect expression, the typical example of what a man is intended to be. In Him each separate faculty finds its perfect development, and each has its true proportion and balance in making up the harmony of the whole. Thus He exhibits in Himself the

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ideal of human nature: He is the Son of man.

But a further question now arises as to the meaning conveyed by this title. Was it associated in the popular mind with the Messiah? And was Jesus, in using it, making in effect a claim to be the Messiah?

There seems to be no adequate reason for supposing that the title was popularly associated with the Messiah at that time. It is no doubt true that the ideal figure, whom Daniel describes as "like unto a son of man" (Dan 7<sup>13</sup>), was interpreted at an early date as representing the Messiah. But the phrase in Daniel is not the ascription of a title; it is a description of appearance. It simply means that the form of the Being seen in the vision was that of a man. There is no reason to suppose that, when Jesus, who appeared as a humble peasant of Galilee, took the title "Son of man," His hearers would for a moment associate it with the description of the august Being of Daniel's vision, whose appearance indeed was that of a man, but who came in the clouds of heaven.

There is, however, another use of the title, which we must examine. It occurs several times in the Similitudes of the Book of Enoch. There is a vision of "one whose face was as the appearance of a man, and his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels." The angel who

accompanies Enoch thus explains the vision: "This is the son of man who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness and who reveals all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him, and his lot before the Lord of Spirits hath surpassed everything in uprightness for ever. And this son of man, whom thou hast seen, will arouse the kings and the mighty ones from their couches, and the strong ones from their thrones, and execute judgment upon them" (Enoch 46). The Book of Enoch has other passages to the same effect, which are clearly Messianic prophecies. The Messiah is thought of as a Being of superhuman power, who shares the throne of God Himself and executes judgment upon the earth. He is described as the Son of man.

It will follow from this that among those who were familiar with the Book of Enoch the phrase "the Son of man" would be regarded as a title of the Messiah. But the date of this portion of the Similitudes has not been fixed with certainty. It may quite possibly be post-Christian. But even if it be dated before the ministry of Jesus, there is nothing to show that those who listened to the teaching of Jesus had any knowledge of the book. There is therefore no reason to suppose that Jesus took the title Son of man with any idea that it would be associated with a Messianic claim.



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There is, on the other hand, strong reason to believe the contrary. There is clear evidence that a long time elapsed before Jesus made any claim to be the Christ, or allowed any such claim to be made on His behalf. It was at the close of a prolonged period of companionship with the Twelve that He asked, "Who say ye that I am?" And the great commendation which St. Peter won was a testimony to the faith which led him to realise the truth: "Thou art the Christ." Had the title "Son of man" implied Messiahship, this emphatic praise would have been out of place. Moreover, the prohibition which followed proves that no public claim had been made. They were to tell no man that He was the Christ. And, further, those "possessed with devils" were silenced, because they knew He was the Christ (Lk 4<sup>41</sup>). The time had not come to put before the people a claim which as yet they would only misunderstand. Clearly, then, the familiar title, "the Son of man," can have had no such associations in the popular mind.

It was a title which in due course would fit in well with the claim to Messiahship when that claim had to be made. But in the meantime it served the purpose of leading men's thoughts towards a truer conception of the Person and Work of Jesus. They must learn first the significance of His perfect humanity, and then



they would be able to go forward to a deeper conception of His Person.

In connection with this position taken up by Jesus, we should note His reply to the messengers of St. John the Baptist. They were sent with the direct question, "Art thou He that cometh, or look we for another?" This was equivalent to asking the question, "Art Thou the Messiah?" Jesus did not answer the question in words, but pointed to the character and contents of His Work. The inference that Jesus wished the Baptist to draw was clearly this: that, putting aside the question of His own Messiahship, His Work was of a totally different character from that which popular beliefs associated with the expected Messiah. Hence the answer of Jesus to the messengers is an important piece of self-testimony. It is an indication as to the direction in which one must look to find what Jesus regarded as the essential principles underlying His Work: "Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them" (Mt 11<sup>4f.</sup>). The Work of the Son of man is to bring deliverance to suffering humanity; to give help where help is most needed; to show in fullest measure the spirit of love.

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In this same spirit He claimed that in Himself was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah—

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
Because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the  
poor :  
He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,  
And recovering of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty them that are bruised,  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord ” (Lk 4<sup>18f.</sup>).

Thus Jesus was concerned to lay stress upon the character and contents of His Mission, not to claim for it a title which had become associated with false ideas. At the same time, His Mission is one which has a Divine sanction. It is derived from the Spirit of the Lord, who has anointed Him for the work.

We have now cleared the way for an examination of the positive teaching of Jesus. Let us see what revelation He makes to us of His Person and Work in connection with His chosen title, the Son of man.

Jesus points to His mode of living. It is a life of naturalness and simplicity, not clogged by any artificial asceticism. “The Son of man is come eating and drinking ” (Mt 11<sup>19</sup> = Lk 7<sup>34</sup>). But at the same time He bears His full share of the hardships of human life; He shrinks from no

suffering which the fulfilment of His Mission involves. "The Son of man hath not where to lay His head" (Mt 8<sup>20</sup> = Lk 9<sup>58</sup>). And further, He requires that there shall be no shrinking from the consequences of discipleship on the part of those who follow Him. "Blessed are ye," He said to the disciples, "when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake" (Lk 6<sup>22</sup>). The Son of man exhibits the ideal of human life under the circumstances in which He lived; and He required of His disciples that no threat of consequences should be allowed to turn them from the pursuit of the same ideal.

Let us now consider two passages in which the title "Son of man" is associated with a claim of authority.

The first of these is in connection with the plucking of the ears of corn by the disciples on the sabbath day. The accusation of the Pharisees, that the disciples were acting unlawfully, was met by the reply: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: so that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath" (Mt 12<sup>8</sup> = Mk 2<sup>28</sup> = Lk 6<sup>5</sup>). The sabbath, that is, was instituted in order to serve the purpose of man's higher needs, to help him in his struggle to attain the true ideal of human life. If at any moment the cere-

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monial restrictions which guard the sabbath become a hindrance instead of a help in the struggle to fulfil the true purpose of life, they may then be set aside. Indeed, they ought then to be set aside; for to observe them in the letter would defeat the object with which they were framed. Since, then, the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath, one whose conception of life and its purpose is true will be entitled to decide for himself whether in any particular case such ceremonial regulations ought to be set aside: he will be "lord of the sabbath." More than all, then, it will follow that the Son of man, whose ideal of life is perfect and whose wisdom in pursuing His aims is unquestioned, is "lord of the sabbath." But the claim which the words imply is not essentially different from the claim which might be made for all men whose purpose is true and noble, and who possess the higher wisdom as the guide of their life. The difference is only one of degree.

The second passage which we have particularly to examine occurs in the narrative of the healing of the paralytic. Jesus prefaced the act of healing by the claim to forgive the man's sins. The scribes who were present murmured indignantly at such a claim being made. It seemed to them to amount to blasphemy. "Who can forgive sins but one, even God?" they said. Jesus maintained His claim; and He then effected the bodily healing of

the man as a proof that in making His claim to forgive sins He was also speaking with authority. "That ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (He saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house" (Mt 9<sup>6</sup> = Mk 2<sup>10</sup> = Lk 5<sup>24</sup>). We have to inquire, then, what is the significance of the occurrence of the title "Son of man" in this connection. Does Jesus claim to forgive sins in virtue of being the Son of man—in virtue, that is, of being the perfect exemplar of what a man should be?

Now it would not be true to say that the Son of man, simply as such, has the power of forgiveness. But Jesus clearly regarded Himself as holding an extraordinary commission from God, in virtue of which He possessed authority to forgive sins. And this commission was bestowed upon Him because of His perfect knowledge of human nature and His perfect exhibition of what human nature should be. In other words, He has the power to forgive sins, not because He is Son of man, but because as Son of man He possessed perfectly the qualities which made it fitting that the power of forgiveness should be bestowed upon Him by God. It is exactly this idea which is expressed in the Johanneine saying: the Father "gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of man" (Jn 5<sup>27</sup>).

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The claim involves an intimate knowledge of the consciences of men and a power of reading men's hearts. And indeed it was just this power, again and again so strikingly shown, which aroused the wonder of those who witnessed it. He knew what was in man. And knowing what was in man, He knew where forgiveness was possible and where the message of forgiveness might be spoken. Hence the word of forgiveness spoken by the Son of man on earth was ratified in heaven. There was no trenching upon the prerogative of God: for the perfect knowledge of the Son of man enabled Him to interpret God's will; and in virtue of the authority committed to Him He delivered the message of forgiveness.

The same may be said of another incident in the Lucan narrative, where the message of forgiveness is spoken to the woman that was a sinner. "He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven" (Lk 7<sup>48</sup>). Here indeed the words of Jesus are in themselves simply declaratory, but those who heard the saying understood it as being more than a mere declaration, and implying a claim to forgive. "Who is this," they said, "that forgiveth sins also?" (Lk 7<sup>49</sup>). Presumably the words were actually spoken in an authoritative form, as in the case of the paralytic.

We now have to examine three passages in the Matthæan tradition, which are placed in the Gospel at a period previous to the confession of St. Peter,



but which probably belong to a later date in the ministry.

The first of these passages is that which relates to the sign of Jonah. "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Mt 12<sup>40</sup>). The Matthaean version of the saying makes Jonah a sign of the Death and Resurrection of the Son of man. But it should be noticed that this interpretation of the sign is peculiar to St. Matthew. St. Luke finds the point of comparison in the idea of Jonah as a preacher of repentance (Lk 11<sup>30</sup>); and the probability is that this, being the simpler idea, represents the original form of the saying in the non-Marcan document. After the actual event of the Resurrection on the third day, it would be natural to see a further similitude in the story of Jonah. But it seems unlikely that, if the saying had been originally spoken in the Matthaean form, so striking a correspondence with the history of Jesus should have been omitted in the Lucan narrative.

But apart from the form of the saying, we have to consider its chronological position. St. Matthew places it before St. Peter's confession, while St. Luke reverses the order. Now, since as a rule St. Matthew's notes of time are less careful than those of St. Luke, we shall probably do best in this

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case to prefer the Lucan order of events. It hardly seems consistent with a natural process of development in teaching, that the saying in its Matthaean form should have been spoken at such an early date in the Ministry.

The second Matthaean passage we have to consider is the Parable of the Tares. And here we find the introduction of a new idea. Not only is the Son of man said to be the sower of the good seed, which is explained to mean the introducing into the world "the sons of the kingdom," but also He is the supreme agent in the Great Judgment. "The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt 13<sup>41</sup>). In this parable the ideas are Messianic throughout: Jesus makes a clear claim to be the Messiah.

Are we, then, to say after all that the title "Son of man" received a Messianic interpretation at an early period of the Ministry, and that Jesus at this early date publicly claimed to be the Messiah? This idea is contradicted by the mass of the evidence. And indeed there is no reason for supposing that this parable, which is peculiar to St. Matthew, is recorded here in its chronological place. For it is clearly the constant habit of St. Matthew to gather together a number of sayings or a group



of parables, which bear on a single subject, and to record them consecutively. Thus, in the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel we have a group of parables of which this is one, all bearing on one subject, "the kingdom of heaven." They were doubtless spoken on various occasions; and it is probable that some of them, including the Parable of the Tares, belong to a late period in the Ministry.

But there is one more Matthaean saying, recorded in the period anterior to St. Peter's confession, in which the title "Son of man" is used in a Messianic connection. The triple tradition gives the account of the charge given by Jesus to the Twelve on the occasion of their Mission to the cities of Galilee (Mt 10<sup>1-5-15</sup> = Mk 6<sup>7-11</sup> = Lk 9<sup>1-5</sup>). To this tradition St. Matthew adds a further charge, which appears to belong to a different discourse, inasmuch as it is eschatological in character (Mt 10<sup>16-42</sup>). Indeed, the general Synoptic tradition shows that it is little more than a cento of passages gathered from later discourses, spoken for the most part near the close of the Ministry. In this Matthaean addition to the charge, there comes the saying: "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (Mt 10<sup>23</sup>). Here clearly the Son of man is thought of as the Messiah, and the idea is eschatological. But the above considerations will show that we need have no difficulty in

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regarding this saying also as belonging to a later period.

Let us, then, draw our conclusions as to the use of the title "Son of man" during this first period of the Ministry. We may well believe that Jesus used the title freely of Himself; but it is not likely that He intended it to have, or that it was understood as having, any Messianic connotation. This is what we should expect as antecedently probable, having regard to the false beliefs that had grown up around the idea of the Messiah in the popular mind. And our investigation will have shown that there is no real evidence to the contrary. At a later period, when the time had come for Jesus to put forward His Messianic claims, He still retained the title "Son of man," and used it in unfolding this further teaching about Himself, which was not implied by the actual title. Yet the title "Son of man" revealed a Personality and a Work which in due time was seen to realise the highest possible conception of what the Messiah should be.

We must pass on now to a consideration of the use of another title, "the Son of God." The evidence seems to point to the conclusion that this title was neither used nor implied by Jesus at any time previous to St. Peter's confession. The narratives of the Baptism and of the Temptation

prove indeed that Jesus Himself was conscious, at least from the time of His public appearance, of standing in the unique relation to God which this title implies. At the Baptism, there was the testimony of the voice from heaven : "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased " (Mt 3<sup>17</sup> = Mk 1<sup>11</sup> = Lk 3<sup>22</sup>). Whether we were right or wrong in the conclusion we came to, that this testimony was heard neither by the Baptist nor by the bystanders, it was certainly recognised by Jesus Himself. In the narrative of the Temptation, the devil makes his appeal to Jesus in two out of the three temptations as the Son of God. "If Thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread " (Mt 4<sup>3</sup> = Lk 4<sup>3</sup>) ; "If Thou art the Son of God, cast Thyself down " (Mt 4<sup>6</sup> = Lk 4<sup>9</sup>). The narrative of the Baptism, if our supposition in regard to it is correct, and the narrative of the Temptation, in any case, must have come from Jesus Himself. But the character of the teaching, which these mysterious narratives convey, makes it probable that the unfolding of them to the disciples took place at a late period of the ministry. Historically, they belong to the beginning of the Ministry ; but, as forming a part of the teaching of Jesus, they probably have their place near the close. The fact that the Evangelists put these narratives into their chronological place leads to no presumption that the disciples were asked at an

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early stage to ponder over the deep mystery of their Master's relation to God.

Rather it would seem that Jesus deliberately kept out of sight this aspect of His Person, which, as the narrative of the Baptism and Temptation show, occupied a place in His own mind all the time. For whenever allusion was made to the relation in which Jesus stood to God, the testimony was at once suppressed by Him.

Examples of this occur in the case of certain men who, in the language of the New Testament, were possessed by unclean spirits. In each case the possessed was the victim of madness. Now it sometimes happens that the insane possess an extraordinary faculty of instinct, which enables them to hit upon a truth which logic and reason would have been powerless to discover. And so it came about that on more than one occasion these poor mad creatures knew instinctively that He who stood before them, and in whose eye was such power, was greater than mere man. And with irrational fear or cringing worship they paid Him their homage. "What have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God" (Mk 1<sup>24</sup> = Lk 4<sup>34</sup>). "The unclean spirits, whensoever they beheld Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God" (Mk 3<sup>11</sup>). And the same instinctive

testimony came from the madmen of Gerasa (Mt 8<sup>29</sup> = Mk 5<sup>7</sup> = Lk 8<sup>28</sup>). But Jesus made it His constant practice to silence such utterances (Mk 3<sup>12</sup>, ἐπετίμα, imperf.; cf. Mk 1<sup>25</sup>, 34, Lk 4<sup>41</sup>). All these prohibitions belong to the period of the Ministry previous to St. Peter's confession, and they seem to constitute a proof that during that period our Lord kept out of sight the thought of His special relation to God.

There are, however, four passages in the First Gospel which we must examine before we can establish this point. The first occurs in the eschatological passage which St. Matthew adds to the charge to the Twelve: "Every one therefore who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Mt 10<sup>32f.</sup>). Here the phrase "My Father," used in such a connection, implies just the same special and indeed unique relation to God as is conveyed by the title "Son of God." But we have already seen reason for supposing that this passage, though included by St. Matthew in the charge to the Twelve, belongs in reality to a later period in the Ministry.

The same may be said of the great central passage of Divine Fatherhood in relation to the Son (Mt 11<sup>25-27</sup> = Lk 10<sup>21f.</sup>). For while St.

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Matthew places this passage before the confession of St. Peter, St. Luke puts it subsequent to that critical occasion. But St. Luke's notes of time, as we have already said, are more exact than those of the First Gospel; and we may therefore quite fairly adopt his order of events in this case.

We next have the Matthean saying: "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother" (Mt 12<sup>50</sup>). In this case the parallel in St. Mark shows that the saying in its original form contained simply the phrase "the will of God" (Mk 3<sup>35</sup>). St. Matthew's phrase, "My Father which is in heaven," is a paraphrase due to the Evangelist.

One more passage in St. Matthew's Gospel must be noticed. In common with St. Mark and St. John, he records the incident of the storm on the Lake of Galilee, when Jesus came to the disciples walking upon the sea. To this narrative St. Matthew adds the further incident of the attempt of St. Peter to walk on the water to meet Jesus. And this addition, peculiar to St. Matthew, thus closes: "When they were gone up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that were in the boat worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God" (Mt 14<sup>32f.</sup>). There is, of course, the possibility that the title here given to Jesus may be due to the Evangelist. But, on the other hand, there is no difficulty in supposing that the im-



pressive exercise of power and authority shown by Jesus evoked on a sudden the unpremeditated ascription: "Thou art the Son of God." It is not quite clear who were the speakers: whether the disciples themselves, or the hired crew of the ship. In any event, the incident does not make it necessary to suppose that the title had actually been used previously by Jesus Himself. The use of the title by the maniacs would probably be sufficient to suggest it at such a crisis, especially when one remembers the peculiar degree of reverence with which the insane are regarded in the East. Our conclusion, then, is that there is no passage in the Gospels which makes it necessary to believe that the Divine Sonship formed part of the teaching of Jesus during this first period of the Ministry.

Let us now look further into the positive claims made by Jesus. There is a very remarkable claim to authority, which runs through the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus claims an authority equivalent to that which first gave its sanction to the Law of Moses: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time" (Mt 5<sup>21</sup>, etc.): thus He introduces a command from the Law. "But I say unto you" (Mt 5<sup>22</sup>, etc.): thus He sets aside the letter of the old commandment, and replaces it by a deeper commandment of His own. His words

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are not a mere interpretation of the old Law: they go beyond it. The old Law had fulfilled its purpose by making possible the higher teaching for which it had prepared the way and which must now take its place. But Jesus, in giving this new teaching, is claiming for Himself a Divine commission: He speaks with an authority derived from God. And it was just this assumption of authority which so amazed His hearers. To their minds, so steeped in traditionalism, the claim seemed to be one of astounding magnitude. "The multitudes were astonished at His teaching: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (Mt 7<sup>28f.</sup>).

There is a further element in the early claims of Jesus. He claims to be a prophet. This claim is implied by His words in the synagogue at Nazareth, where the people of His own city incur His rebuke because they fail to recognise His claim. "A prophet," He said, "is not without honour, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house" (Mt 13<sup>57</sup> = Mk 6<sup>4</sup> = Lk 4<sup>24</sup>). The claim received public recognition as a result of His mighty works. After the raising of the widow's son at Nain, "they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is risen among us: and, God hath visited His people" (Lk 7<sup>16</sup>). This passage is of great importance, as showing the normal effect which the mighty works of Jesus



had upon the people. The effect of such power in any age would depend upon the habits of thought of the time. To the people of Galilee it at once suggested the kind of power which they associated with a great prophet. For had not Elijah and Elisha performed mighty works and raised the dead? Such works would not, to the minds of the people of that day, imply anything higher than the power of a prophet. The people therefore were ready to admit this claim of Jesus. The Pharisees also show that they were aware of the claim, though they tried to discredit it. At the meal in a Pharisee's house, when a woman came in and anointed the feet of Jesus, the host "spake within himself, saying, This man, if He were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is which toucheth Him, that she is a sinner" (Lk 7<sup>39</sup>).

We come now to the question, what attitude towards Jesus was evoked by His Personality and Teaching? We can learn something from the titles by which He was addressed. The title most commonly given to Him was that of *κύριος* or Lord. It is used by St. Peter after the draught of fishes (Lk 5<sup>3</sup>); by the leper who sought to be cleansed (Mt 8<sup>2</sup> = Lk 5<sup>12</sup>; but om. Mk 1<sup>40</sup>); by the centurion who besought Him for his servant (Mt 8<sup>6</sup>, Lk 7<sup>6</sup>; in parallel narratives, but not

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parallel passages); by the disciples in the storm on the lake (Mt 8<sup>25</sup>; but, in the parallel passages, διδάσκαλος in Mk 4<sup>38</sup>, ἐπιστάτης in Lk 8<sup>24</sup>); by two blind men (Mt 9<sup>27</sup>); and by the Syrophenician woman (Mt 15<sup>27</sup> = Mk 7<sup>28</sup>). Jesus also puts the title into the mouth of the unreal disciples, whose allegiance is only in word (Mk 7<sup>21f.</sup>). In all these examples the vocative is used, and the title is consequently anarthrous. It is a title of honour, expressive of respect or reverence. It is such a title as servants would give to their master or pupils to their teacher. It does not imply any exceptional position.

The substantive title "The Lord" (ὁ κύριος) does not occur in this period of the Ministry. When Jesus uses it in His charge to the man who had been possessed of the legion, He almost certainly uses it not of Himself but of God: "Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee" (Mk 5<sup>19</sup>). So at least St. Luke understands it, for he substitutes ὁ θεός for ὁ κύριος (Lk 8<sup>39</sup>). But it is possible that the framer of the original tradition may have taken the title as referring to Jesus Himself. For the narrative takes up the words of the charge, replacing now ὁ κύριος by Ἰησοῦς: "He went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him" (Mk 5<sup>20</sup> = Lk 8<sup>40</sup>).

The title διδάσκαλος was naturally given to

Jesus by His disciples (Mk 4<sup>38</sup>), and it was in this way that the Pharisees preferred to speak of Him (Mt 9<sup>11</sup>, ὁ διδάσκαλος ὑμῶν). St. Luke, as we have seen, uses also the title ἐπιστάτης (Lk 5<sup>5</sup> 8<sup>24</sup>, 46), a term expressive of authority, the equivalent perhaps of the Jewish title Rabbi. The term is peculiar to St. Luke.

One more title must be considered. According to St. Matthew's Gospel, the title "Son of David" was on two occasions given to our Lord during this early period of the Ministry. St. Matthew gives it as used by the two blind men (Mt 9<sup>27</sup>) and also by the Syrophenician woman (Mt 15<sup>22</sup>). The title was Messianic, and its use would imply a recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. But is St. Matthew accurate in regarding this title as having been accorded to Jesus at this early stage of the Ministry? We have already seen strong reason for believing that Jesus had not Himself made any claim to be the Messiah. But, further than this, there is evidence that the idea had not yet occurred to the people. When Jesus asked the disciples what conjectures were current as to His Personality, and put to them the question, "Who do men say that I am?"<sup>1</sup> they answered, "John the Baptist: and others, Elijah; but others, One of the prophets"

<sup>1</sup> A comparison of the parallel Synoptic passages shows that this was the form of the question as preserved by the original tradition.

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(Mt 16<sup>14</sup> = Mk 8<sup>28</sup> = Lk 9<sup>19</sup>). There is no suggestion that any of the people thought of Him as yet as the Messiah. Indeed, St. Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ," is placed in striking contrast to the popular ideas.

The popular attitude towards Jesus was one of respectful homage. A typical attitude is that of Jairus, who "fell at His feet" (Mk 5<sup>22</sup> = Lk 8<sup>41</sup>) and "worshipped Him" (Mt 9<sup>18</sup>). This was the homage of an Eastern salaam. On those who understood Him better, a deeper impression was made by the Personality of Jesus. St. John the Baptist felt himself unworthy to baptize One whose nobility of character he recognised (Mt 3<sup>14</sup>). St. Peter became deeply conscious of his own sinfulness in the presence of Jesus (Lk 5<sup>8</sup>). The disciples felt instinctively that Jesus was far above them. They were impressed not only by His authority and His mighty works, but by the indefinable wonder of His Person.

We are now ready to examine the culminating incident of this first period of the Ministry, the confession of St. Peter. Jesus, having asked the disciples what were the popular beliefs concerning Him, went on to test the belief of the disciples themselves. "Who say ye that I am?" It was St. Peter who answered for the disciples. But when we come to inquire what were the exact terms of his answer, we are met by a difficulty.

For St. Mark reports simply the answer, "Thou art the Christ" (Mk 8<sup>29</sup>), while St. Luke has "The Christ of God" (Lk 9<sup>20</sup>), and St. Matthew gives the fuller reply, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16<sup>16</sup>). Can we accept this full reply as belonging to an original tradition? We may indeed deduce from the textual evidence that the document underlying the Second Gospel contained no more than St. Mark gives us. But St. Matthew at this point evidently had access to an independent tradition (see Mt 16<sup>17-20</sup>), and it is quite possible that the fuller form of St. Peter's reply may rest upon this tradition and may be original.

All three Synoptists agree that on this momentous occasion St. Peter confessed Jesus to be the Christ. This was the goal to which the Work and Teaching of Jesus up to this point had been leading. He had made no such claim either directly or through the adoption of a Messianic title. But He had shown that the Mission with which He was charged was to satisfy the people's deepest needs. Through Him the blind received their sight and the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf were made to hear, the dead were raised up, and the poor had the gospel preached to them. St. Peter had seen all this. And now, as by a flash of spiritual intuition, he recognised that this was the work of the Messiah, the chosen Deliverer, who was to be sent from God. The old false ideas

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which had grown up around the Messianic hope, earthly, fantastic, and extravagant, were set aside, or at least fell into the background. St. Peter had listened to the wonderful teaching of Jesus, who spake as never man spake; whose words were with authority; whose actions were all inspired by love; who in His own Person exhibited without flaw the perfect ideal of human life. And the only possible interpretation of this life came home to him with the certainty of a Divine revelation. His Master was indeed the Messiah, the Expected One, who had been anointed for the work of deliverance, and whose commission was from God Himself. And the Matthaean tradition, in full accordance with this, gives the answering commendation of Jesus: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" (Mt 16<sup>17</sup>).

St. Peter, through his companionship with Jesus, had been led to a true conception of the Messiah. But among the people at large the old false notions still remained. The knowledge which the disciples had gained must therefore remain for a time locked up in their hearts. It was not possible to proclaim the fact of Messiahship without arousing a fanaticism that would spring from the mistaken expectations of the people. So Jesus at once "charged the disciples that they should tell no man that He was the Christ" (Mt 16<sup>20</sup> = Mk 8<sup>30</sup> = Lk 9<sup>21</sup>).



If now we accept as part of the original tradition the additional testimony with which St. Matthew credits St. Peter, in what sense shall we understand the phrase, "The Son of the living God"? The expression "the living God" is deeply suggestive of the Old Testament, and the whole phrase should be read in close connection with Old Testament ideas.

Now, in the Old Testament the idea of sonship with God implies a close relation to God and a position of special privilege or authority. It does not, however, imply any partaking of the Divine Nature. It is ascribed to the race of beings, whether human or not, who are thought of as existing before the Flood (Gn 6<sup>2-4</sup>); to the Judges, or theocratic rulers of Israel (Ps 82<sup>6</sup>); to the king, who rules the people under God's authority (2 S 7<sup>14</sup>); and to an ideal personification of the nation of Israel itself (Ex 4<sup>22</sup>; cf. Hos 11<sup>1</sup>). But the idea of sonship culminates in the Psalms, where it is ascribed to a mighty king whose throne shall be established by God, and with whom God's covenant shall be made for ever,

"I will tell of the decree :

The Lord said unto me, Thou art My son ;

This day have I begotten thee.

Ask of Me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance,

And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps 2<sup>7t</sup>).

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“He shall cry unto Me, Thou art my Father,  
My God, and the rock of my salvation.  
I also will make him My firstborn,  
The highest of the kings of the earth.  
My mercy will I keep for him for evermore,  
And My covenant shall stand fast with him.”  
(Ps 89<sup>26ff.</sup>)

Here, then, is drawn the figure of one who would come in the power of God, and to whose coming men looked forward in eager expectation in the dark days of national sorrow and tragedy. He would be pre-eminently Son of God; occupying towards God a special, and indeed a unique, relation; and, in consequence of this relation, wielding an unexampled authority.

Such was the point which the revelation of the Old Testament had reached. And the use by St. Peter of the phrase “the Son of the living God” implies a belief that in Jesus this expectation was fulfilled. Jesus is the Christ of Old Testament prophecy, and as such occupies a unique position of privilege and authority. He is charged with a Divine Mission under the sanction of the living God.

The answer of Jesus ratifies the confession. Probably for the first time He now speaks of God as “My Father which is in heaven” (Mt 16<sup>17</sup>). There had been from the first the revelation of the general Fatherhood of God, embracing all mankind. But the use of this new expression is a claim of



unique relationship. God is the Father of Jesus in a way in which He is the Father of none other. This much was contained in St. Peter's phrase, as he understood it, "the Son of the living God."

But we must not import into St. Peter's words a meaning which was not realised till later. There is nothing, so far as the Synoptists are concerned, to show that there had been anything in the teaching of Jesus up to this moment which would lead St. Peter to invest the phrase with any fuller meaning than had belonged to it in the Old Testament. He would not think of it as implying a share in the Divine Nature. He would think of Jesus as a man whom God had invested with a unique Mission and to whom He had given a unique authority. He was the Christ by God's appointment, and so was charged with the work of satisfying the deepest needs of man. He stood closer to God than any other could stand: for, in a sense in which no other could bear the title, He was the Son of the living God.

The Matthean tradition gives a fitting close to the incident. The confession of St. Peter had amounted to an ascription to Jesus of spiritual sovereignty. Jesus in reply indicates the method whereby His spiritual sovereignty shall find expression upon earth. The Church shall be founded; and to the Church shall be committed the power of

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jurisdiction and discipline. The ground of this delegated authority is to be found in the fundamental truth of the Person and Mission of Jesus, to which St. Peter, however imperfectly, had borne witness. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt 16<sup>1st</sup>). Faith in the Person and Work of Jesus had now reached a point which allowed this promise to be given.

## CHAPTER II

### FROM ST. PETER'S CONFESSION TO THE CRUCIFIXION

STEP by step Jesus had been leading the disciples on towards a spiritual conception of His Mission. The culmination of the first period of training had been reached in the great confession of St. Peter. Jesus was now acknowledged by him as the Messiah; and this acknowledgment was made in spite of the fact that the entire Life and Teaching of Jesus was of quite a different character from that which was associated in the popular mind with the Messianic hope.

The great fact to which by a true spiritual intuition St. Peter had been led was not as yet to form the subject of a public announcement. The disciples were to tell the saying to no man: they were "strictly charged that they should not make Him known." But, in spite of this, the idea now began to spread in the popular mind that this great Teacher, in whom such mighty works were showing themselves, was the Messiah. They began

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to ask themselves whether this was not the Son of David (Mt 12<sup>23</sup>).

The title "Son of David" was a recognised description of the Messiah. The idea grew out of the Davidic promises of the Old Testament, in which God's unfailing blessing is promised to David's house. For the deliverance and blessings which are promised to the people of God were to come through the righteous king, who should be of David's line and sit on David's throne. Here, for instance, is a prophecy from the Psalms :

"Then Thou spakest in vision to Thy saints,  
And saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty ;  
I have exalted one chosen out of the people.  
I have found David My servant ;  
With My holy oil have I anointed him :

His seed also will I make to endure for ever,  
And his throne as the days of heaven " (Ps 89<sup>19-29</sup>).

Accordingly, Isaiah says of the child that is born to be the deliverer of the people : " Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever " (Is 9<sup>7</sup>).

And Micah looks to the city of David to provide the expected deliverer : " Thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come

forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting" (Mic 5<sup>2</sup>).

Hence the Old Testament contributed a circle of ideas which connected the Messiah with the house of David, and prepared the way for the use of the term "Son of David" as a recognised Messianic title.

The title first appears in the Psalms of Solomon. These psalms are a product of Palestinian Judaism; and they should almost certainly be dated shortly after the conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey in B.C. 63. They reveal a condition of things in which the memory of the sufferings and the humiliation of those days was still fresh and vivid in the mind of the writer. But the catastrophe had only the effect of making his faith burn more brightly. The greatness of the need led him to emphasise and dilate upon the Messianic hope. And this hope takes a form definitely connected with the Davidic promises. For though the kingdom of Israel was for the time overthrown, yet David's house would never come to an end.

"Thou, Lord, didst choose David as king over Israel,  
And Thou didst swear to him concerning his seed for  
ever,  
That his kingdom should not fail before Thee."  
(Ps Sol 17<sup>5-7</sup>.)

And then more definitely the hope of deliverance is fixed upon one particular descendant of David's

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line. A son of David is looked for who shall deliver Jerusalem. And so the prayer is offered:

“Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king,  
     even a son of David,  
 At the moment which Thou, O God, hast determined,  
 To reign over Israel, Thy servant.  
 And gird him with strength to shatter unrighteous  
 rulers” (Ps Sol 17<sup>23f.</sup>).

The character of the kingdom of this son of David is clearly laid down. He will bring deliverance to the people and will be their righteous judge (*ib.* <sup>28</sup>). He is a righteous king and is divinely instructed (*ib.* <sup>35</sup>).

The expectation here unfolded is clearly the Messianic hope. The king who is looked for is Christ the Lord (*Χριστὸς κύριος*, *ib.* <sup>36</sup>). There is no doubt here as to the Greek text. Schürer indeed says that *Χριστὸς κύριος* is a mistranslation of *משיח יהוה*, and adds that the correct rendering, *Χριστὸς κυρίου*, is found in Ps 18<sup>8</sup>. But this is a pure assumption, since the words there are both in the genitive, and may quite well be in apposition (*ὑπὸ ῥάβδον παιδείας Χριστοῦ κυρίου*). There is, moreover, no difficulty in this attribution of the term *κύριος* to the Messiah. It is not *ὁ κύριος*, which would have been understood as referring to Jehovah. The anarthrous use of the word would offer a natural title of honour to apply to the expected Messiah. He would be an anointed Lord,

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But further, the coming deliverer, who would sit on David's throne and be of David's line, would stand in a specially close relation to God; and from this he would derive his strength: for—

“God has made him mighty by His Holy Spirit,  
And wise in understanding counsel with strength and  
righteousness;  
And the blessing of the Lord shall be with him in  
strength;  
And his hope in the Lord shall not grow weak.”  
(Ps Sol 17<sup>42f.</sup>)

We may probably say that these psalms give us a fairly accurate view of the Messianic hope as it existed in the popular mind at the time of the Ministry of Jesus. This hope had its two sides, the temporal and the spiritual. And there would be wide differences, according as the one or the other of these two aspects was emphasised. The humiliating political conditions of the day would tend to thrust the idea of temporal deliverance into prominence; and worldly minds would forget that the deeper hope looked forward to a kingdom of righteousness founded on spiritual power. And though there were some, and perhaps more than we are inclined to think, who like Simeon and Anna were filled with a spiritual hope, yet the great bulk of the common people had little thought of anything beyond a temporal deliverance.

Hence the title, Son of David, which we find first in the Psalms of Solomon, as applied to the



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Messiah, became naturally a favourite and common designation of the expected deliverer. The people longed to see a descendant of David sitting once again on David's throne.

The Gospels afford us clear evidence of the popularity of this title, as expressing best the common hope. Thus it is used by Bartimæus, who appeals to the power that lay behind the title, as affording the ground upon which he hoped to be healed: "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me" (Mt 20<sup>30f.</sup> = Mk 10<sup>47f.</sup> = Lk 18<sup>38f.</sup>). The popular expectation reached a climax in the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, when Jesus was hailed as a King of David's line. The Synoptists, while giving in different forms the acclamations of the people, agree in representing their homage as paid to One whom they thought of as the Messianic King. St. Matthew and St. Mark definitely regard Him as re-establishing David's line and David's throne: "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Mt 21<sup>9</sup>); "Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David" (Mk 11<sup>10</sup>). St. Luke, however, merely has: "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest" (Lk 19<sup>38</sup>). The first and second Gospels doubtless stand nearest to the original tradition at this point. St. Luke was not inter-



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ested in the Davidic allusion, and moreover, he has allowed his version of the words to be influenced by the narrative of the vision of the angels to the shepherds at Bethlehem (Lk 2<sup>14</sup>). Going back, therefore, to the Matthean and Marcan versions, we find Jesus proclaimed by the popular voice as the Messianic King of David's line, and as deriving His Mission from God.

The children in the Temple took up the same cry: "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Mt 21<sup>15</sup>); and the claim implied by the acceptance of this homage was made the ground of the accusation against Him before Pilate. It was said that, in treason against Caesar, He had made Himself King of the Jews (Mt 27<sup>11</sup> = Mk 15<sup>2</sup> = Lk 23<sup>2</sup>).

But while accepting the title "Son of David" as expressing one aspect of His Person and Mission, Jesus distinctly hinted that the title was inadequate. It did not cover the whole ground. "How say the scribes," He asked, "that the Christ is the Son of David? David himself said in the Holy Spirit,

The Lord said unto my Lord,  
Sit thou on My right hand,  
Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

David himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he his son?" (Mt 22<sup>45</sup> = Mk 12<sup>37</sup> = Lk 20<sup>41</sup>).

The Christ may indeed be called the Son of David, as being an ideal King of David's line,

wielding a spiritual sovereignty derived from God. But this truth was only a partial one; and even so the title was liable to misunderstanding. Hence Jesus discouraged its use; and St. Luke, with his freer range of thought and deeper spiritual insight, cut it out altogether from his version of the acclamation in the Triumphal Entry. Jesus implied that the Christ was something greater than an ideal king of David's line, however spiritually understood. What the greater truth was will presently appear.

In the meantime, let us notice that Jesus claims to be the bearer of a Divine Commission. As the Messiah He is invested with a unique authority. He stands absolutely above His disciples. "One is your Master," He said to them, "even the Christ" (Mt 23<sup>10</sup>). In virtue of His Divine Commission, He performs His mighty works. He casts out devils: but He does this in virtue of His relation to God. It is "by the Spirit of God" (Mt 12<sup>28</sup>); "by the finger of God" (Lk 11<sup>20</sup>). But further, the commission laid upon Him enables Him in turn to commission others: "I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes" (Mt 23<sup>34</sup>). In this way Jesus emphasises the character of Messiahship as He understood it. The conception thus shown is something very different from that which was in the popular mind and which expressed itself in the title "Son of David." It reveals a

spiritual power derived from God Himself and perpetuating itself in the world.

We have next to consider the eschatological significance of the Person of Jesus as unfolded in a series of passages covering practically the whole of the period with which we are now concerned. It is to be noted that the eschatological teaching of the Synoptists is uniformly and almost exclusively connected with the title "Son of man." Thus at the trial before the High Priest, in answer to the High Priest's question, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus said, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mt 26<sup>64</sup> = Mk 14<sup>62</sup> = Lk 22<sup>69</sup>). The use of the title "Son of man" is the more noteworthy in this passage, for the idea contained in the High Priest's question is that of Divine Sonship. Was Jesus, he asks, the Son of the Blessed, the Son of God? But in the answer of Jesus, as soon as the eschatological thought is introduced, the title is at once changed to "Son of man."

Can we see why this title should be regarded, as it clearly is by the Synoptists, as the distinctively eschatological title? Probably the reason is to be found in this particular incident. For the reply of Jesus is a clear allusion to Daniel's vision: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with

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the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before Him " (Da 7<sup>13</sup>). It is true, as we have already seen, that the phrase "son of man," as used by the writer of the Book of Daniel, is a description and is not a title. It means merely that He whose glorious appearance is described was in human form. But the phrase would be easily associated in the mind of Jesus with the title which He Himself had chosen to express the fullness of His representative manhood. And so, through this apocalyptic passage in Daniel, Jesus might come to regard the title "Son of man" as most appropriate to His eschatological claims. The eschatological significance of the title does not lie in the title itself, which we have already seen is expressive primarily of the ideal manhood of Jesus. But a secondary significance was given to the title by Jesus; and this, we may say, was the outcome of an accidental association of ideas. It was, however, rendered easier by the fact that the eschatological teaching of Jesus belongs exclusively to the later part of the Ministry. There was therefore time for a title, which Jesus adopted from the beginning as characteristic of His Mission, to acquire a secondary significance in connection with His transcendent prerogatives as Supreme Judge of mankind.

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Let us now examine the claims made by Jesus in these eschatological passages, in which He almost always speaks of Himself as the Son of man.<sup>1</sup> We are met at the outset by a certain confusion of thought. Two great catastrophic events were in the mind of Jesus. There was first a temporal and local judgment, the destruction of Jerusalem; and beyond this there was the universal judgment at the last day. It would seem that the impending fall of Jerusalem loomed so large in the minds of the hearers of Jesus as to destroy the true sense of perspective and to lead them in some measure to confuse the one judgment with the other. At all events, the eschatological discourses, as recorded by the Synoptists, do not clearly distinguish between what was said as to the fall of Jerusalem and the sayings relating to the Last Judgment.

But it is at least clear that the Son of man is regarded as executing judgment upon the guilty city. Its punishment is a visitation from Him. It is a "coming of the Son of man," swift and irresistible as the lightning (Mt 24<sup>27</sup> = Lk 17<sup>24</sup>). The days of terrible distress and suffering in which this judgment will be effected are "days of the Son of man" (Lk 17<sup>22-26</sup>), days in which the Son of man is revealed (Lk 17<sup>30</sup>). Hence the Son of man claims the office of executing the judgments of God through the temporal catastrophes that mark the

<sup>1</sup> Mt 24<sup>30</sup> = Lk 13<sup>32</sup> is an exception.

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course of the world's history, of which the destruction of Jerusalem is taken as a conspicuous type.

It is, however, with the coming of the Son of man at the end of the world that we are here principally concerned. Let us examine what may be learnt as to the character of that coming and the office assigned to the Son of man.

First, we find emphasis laid upon its suddenness and unexpectedness. In this respect it is compared to the overwhelming of the world by the flood: "As were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. . . . Therefore be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mt 24<sup>37ff.</sup>; cf. Lk 17<sup>26</sup> 12<sup>40</sup>). The duty of watchfulness is emphasised: "lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping" (Mk 13<sup>36</sup>). And the same teaching is found in the Parable of the Ten Virgins: "Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour" (Mt 25<sup>13</sup>).

According to St. Matthew, the disciples asked Jesus, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Mt 24<sup>3</sup>). But it would appear that St. Mark preserves the original



form of the question: "What shall be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" (Mk 13<sup>4</sup> = Lk 21<sup>7</sup>). The question, as asked, had reference not to the final judgment, but to the destruction of Jerusalem, as is shown by the reply of Jesus. With St. Matthew, however, the principal interest is with the final judgment; and consequently, in this apocalyptic discourse, in which the circumstances of the two judgments are interwoven, the language is so modified in the First Gospel as to make the thought of the final judgment predominant.

The Synoptists agree in regarding the final judgment as following close upon the great catastrophe of the fall of Jerusalem: "Immediately, after the tribulation of those days," the end will come (Mt 24<sup>29</sup> = Mk 13<sup>24</sup> = Lk 21<sup>27</sup>). "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (Mt 24<sup>30</sup>). The last words are peculiar to St. Matthew, and correspond to the peculiar form which St. Matthew gives to the initial question asked by the disciples. The crucial words which follow, and which belong to the triple tradition, seem to make it clear that St. Matthew has in his mind no other sign than the appearance of the Son of man Himself in majesty: "They shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Mt 24<sup>30</sup> = Mk 13<sup>26</sup> = Lk 21<sup>27</sup>).

Jesus then claims that He will return in the glory of heaven at the end of the world. For His office of Supreme Judge He will sit as Son of man on "the throne of His glory" (Mt 19<sup>28</sup>), while a subordinate office of judgment will be committed to the Twelve. For this work the angels are His ministers. Their charge is to "gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Mt 24<sup>31</sup> = Mk 13<sup>27</sup>). But the work of the Son of man is not merely the justification of the elect. He is the arbiter of the destiny of all mankind: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all the nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats" (Mt 25<sup>31ff.</sup>). As Supreme Judge He exercises a royal prerogative (Mt 25<sup>34</sup>): He is a King upon His throne.

Such being the overwhelming majesty of the Son of man, He has a claim upon the allegiance of men, and demands that this allegiance shall be openly acknowledged. St. Peter's confession is followed by the assertion of this claim and the consequences of refusing it: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when He cometh in the glory



of His Father with the holy angels" (Mk 8<sup>38</sup> = Lk 9<sup>26</sup>). The saying is somewhat modified by St. Matthew, who emphasises the judicial character of the sentence: "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then shall He render to every man according to his deeds" (Mt 16<sup>27</sup>). St. Luke records the complementary saying: "Every one who shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God" (Lk 12<sup>8</sup>).

The Son of man, upon whom the unique commission of judgment has been laid, requires that He shall be confessed before men. Yet, even so, there is a possibility of forgiveness for those who have failed: "Every one who shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven" (Mt 12<sup>31</sup> = Mk 3<sup>28</sup> = Lk 12<sup>10</sup>). The word spoken against the Son of man admits of forgiveness; but the sin stands in contrast to that against the Holy Spirit. For this means the reviling of that which is most awful and sacred; it is rebellion against the innermost spirit of the Mind of God. This sin represents the final act of impenitence, when no contrition is possible and when, therefore, there can be no forgiveness.

The effect of the contrast drawn in this passage is to emphasise the seriousness of sin committed against the Son of man. For, even though such

sin admits of forgiveness, it is placed only second to another sin, for which no forgiveness is possible. Jesus then makes His claim. But what, He asks, will be the response to that claim? "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Lk 18<sup>8</sup>). When the Son of man sits upon the throne of His glory as Supreme Judge of all mankind at the Last Day, will He find acceptance or rejection of the message He came to give? No answer is given, but the mere asking of the question suggests a solemn warning.

Let us now sum up the teaching of these eschatological passages upon the Person of Jesus. The teaching is very striking and for the most part belongs to the original tradition underlying the Synoptic narrative. There is no reason for doubting that in substance it is the teaching of Jesus Himself.

It represents Jesus, the Son of man, as endowed with a unique office of transcendent majesty. He is the agent in the execution of the temporal judgments of God, such as the destruction of Jerusalem. But, more than this, He is the Supreme Judge of all mankind; and in this capacity He will appear in glory at the end of the world. The angels are His angels: they bear His messages; they do His will. He passes sentence on all men according to their deeds. He demands from all men unswerving loyalty and obedience.

There is no statement, as yet, as to the essential nature of Him upon whom this transcendent office and royal prerogative is conferred. It is as Son of man, ideal Representative and Exemplar of the human race, that He makes this tremendous claim. But though no explicit statement is yet made that He who asserts this claim is of other essence than the sons of men, yet clearly reflection cannot allow the matter to rest at this point. Questions are raised which demand an answer. The office of Judge of the human race requires for its discharge infinite knowledge and infinite power. How can this belong to one of the sons of men?

The same question is suggested by the atoning power which Jesus ascribes to His Death as Son of man: "The Son of man came not be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mt 20<sup>28</sup> = Mk 10<sup>45</sup>). Thus the Death of the Son of man is said to pay the ransom for the sins of men. And again, the shedding of the life-blood of the Son of man is "for many unto remission of sins" (Mt 26<sup>28</sup>). Therefore the Eucharist was instituted as a sacrificial meal. The Son of man is Himself the Sacrifice upon which His disciples feed. In accordance with His bidding, they partake of His Body and His Blood (Mt 26<sup>26-29</sup> = Mk 14<sup>22-25</sup> = Lk 22<sup>15-20</sup>).

Behind this, again, there must lie a doctrine, which has not yet become explicit, as to the Person

of Him who calls Himself the Son of man. Clearly the picture is not yet complete. Something further is postulated, which remains yet to be revealed.

We must therefore again move forward. Our next step must be to examine the concurrent teaching during this period as to the relation between Jesus and the Father.

From the time of His Baptism certainly Jesus was conscious of standing in a special relation of Sonship to God. Whether this consciousness definitely existed before the Baptism, it is difficult to say. We shall hardly think it right to attach any doctrinal significance to the words of Jesus in the Temple at the age of twelve: "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?" (Lk 2<sup>49</sup>). The Fatherhood of God was at least in some measure recognised by the Jews, and we should especially expect to find it present to the minds of that circle of devout men and women to which the Holy Family belonged. We may well suppose that as Jesus "advanced in wisdom and stature" (Lk 2<sup>52</sup>), the training He received would include the thought of a Fatherhood of God embracing His faithful people in love. Jesus, newly made a "son of the law," would feel with special vividness His Sonship to God, upon whose full service He had now entered. Probably, therefore, the words spoken in the Temple imply nothing more than a

claim to the privileges granted by God's covenant with His people.

When, however, we come to the Baptism of Jesus, we find a clear assertion of a Divine Sonship, which is distinct from anything that could be predicated of men in general. A voice from heaven bears witness: "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased" (Mt 3<sup>17</sup> = Mk 1<sup>11</sup> = Lk 3<sup>22</sup>). The question then arises whether this constituted a new revelation in the mind of Jesus, or whether it did but confirm an intuition which had already come to Him through years of meditation as He came to manhood. We cannot say. But this at least is clear, that Jesus ascended from the Jordan with a consciousness of standing in a special relation to the Father. He knew Himself to be pre-eminently the Son of God.

But the revelation of the Baptism, like that of the Temptation which follows, was for the time being for Jesus only. As we have already seen, we must suppose that Jesus kept silence upon the inner teaching of these incidents till a late period in the Ministry. In the Temptation, Satan bases his appeal on two out of three occasions upon the Divine Sonship: "If Thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread" (Mt 4<sup>3</sup> = Lk 4<sup>3</sup>); "If Thou art the Son of God, cast Thyself down" (Mt 4<sup>6</sup> = Lk 4<sup>9</sup>). From the beginning of the Ministry, therefore, the funda-

mental fact in the consciousness of Jesus is His Divine Sonship. He is the Son of God in a sense in which none can be His peer.

We have seen reason to conclude that this transcendent fact was studiously kept out of sight by Jesus in His teaching up to the critical occasion of St. Peter's confession. But after that incident it appears again and again. It is implied in the use of the terms of Fatherhood and Sonship, which occur so frequently in the second period of the Ministry.

Let us examine the passages in which God is spoken of or addressed in this way—sometimes as "My Father," sometimes "My heavenly Father," or "My Father which is in heaven."

We have already noticed this usage in an eschatological passage, speaking of the final judgment, when the Son of man "cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." These words, which are common to the three Synoptists, occur in one connection in the second and third Gospels (Mk 8<sup>38</sup> = Lk 9<sup>26</sup>) and in a different connection in St. Matthew (Mt 16<sup>27</sup>). This fact shows that they belong to the original tradition, which underlies the narrative upon which the triple Synoptic tradition rests. If the original context of the words is doubtful, the genuineness of the words themselves is beyond question. There can be no doubt that Jesus did in fact make the tremendous claim which the words imply.



Jesus says of the children : " See that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven " (Mt 18<sup>10</sup>). At the same time He speaks of God as " Your Father which is in heaven " (Mt 18<sup>14</sup>) ; for God also stands in the relation of Father to His people. But we never find such a phrase as " our Father " expressive of association of Jesus with the people as sons of God.

Jesus never brackets Himself with the people as sharing with them the same degree of Sonship with the Father. The Lord's Prayer is no exception to this, for it is a prayer framed for the people to use. The idea of Fatherhood in relation to Jesus is quite different in kind and degree from the Fatherhood of God in relation to the people. The two ideas cannot be bracketed together. Jesus is careful to keep them distinct. His own relation to the Father is unique.

Next notice the promise of answer to prayer based upon this very fact of Divine Sonship : " If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven " (Mt 18<sup>19</sup>). And then follows the promise of Jesus to be present with His disciples when they shall be gathered together in His name ; it is a promise which implies a mysterious element in His Being, differentiating Him from others of mankind.



When as King He sits to judge the world, He will execute His office in virtue of His relation to His Father. "Come, ye blessed of My Father," will be His call to the righteous (Mt 25<sup>34</sup>). The kingdom, which is His as Son, is further emphasised in its connection with His Father. So He gives to the Twelve their delegated authority: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as My Father appointed unto Me, that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk 22<sup>29f.</sup>).

Are we to say that this passage shows a merely temporal outlook, and that its view is limited by the horizon of Jewish thought? It is natural to connect with the promise contained in it the hope shown by the question of the apostles immediately before the Ascension: "Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Ac 1<sup>6</sup>). We should probably say that Jesus in His promise was conveying so much of the truth to the Twelve as they were at the moment able to receive. The promise is couched in Judaic terms: it by no means follows that Jesus regarded the effect of His Mission as confined within such limits. We should not, indeed, be warranted in introducing here the idea of a spiritual Israel, and saying that under the figure of the twelve tribes Jesus indicates a community drawn from all peoples, and making up a spiritual kingdom of God. Rather, Jesus

speaks to His disciples as Jews, and promises them a complete fulfilment of the true national hope, rightly understood. This fulfilment should be one outcome of the Gospel. It will be a part of the effect of His Mission.

There, is, however, nothing to warrant the assertion that Jesus here discloses a purely national interest. Such an interpretation would be possible if the passage stood alone. It must be interpreted in the sense which the whole range of the teaching of Jesus requires. The unique relation to the Father which He claims for Himself makes it impossible to suppose that He regarded His work as limited by the national hope of the Jews: the explicit statements, which we have already cited, show that in fact He regarded His Mission as world-wide in its bearing.

The intimate personal relation to the Father is illustrated by the prayer in Gethsemane. Here the Synoptists, while differing in the form of words ascribed to Jesus at this sacred moment, yet agree that it is as "Father" that Jesus addresses God. "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee" (Mk 14<sup>36</sup>), writes St. Mark, keeping closest probably to the original tradition; "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me" (Mt 26<sup>39</sup>), is St. Matthew's rendering; while St. Luke has simply, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me" (Lk 22<sup>42</sup>). Jesus appeals to the

sacred and intimate relation of Fatherhood at this crisis in Gethsemane.

The same appeal is made a moment later when He is seized by His captors. Rebuking St. Peter for his attack upon the High Priest's servant, He said to him, "Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech My Father, and He shall even now send Me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Mt 26<sup>53f.</sup>). It is interesting to compare this with the Johannine version of the words of Jesus in response to the act of St. Peter: "Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (Jn 18<sup>11</sup>). The First and Fourth Gospels have here the appearance of appealing to a common tradition, of which their recollection differs, while they agree in the central fact of the reference of Jesus to His Father.

In the same spirit we have the first and last of the recorded sayings spoken upon the Cross. There is the prayer for the soldiers: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Lk 23<sup>34</sup>), where, however, the textual authority is weak. And there is the commendatory prayer at the close: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Lk 23<sup>46</sup>).

Let us now notice the occurrence of the correlative idea of Sonship. The Divine Sonship is implied by the claim of Jesus to be free from

obligation to pay the half-shekel collected by the Jews for the maintenance of the Temple worship. The kings of the earth exact tribute of strangers, but "the sons are free" (Mt 17<sup>26</sup>). Jesus is free because He is the Son in the Father's house.

A unique Sonship is claimed in the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen: "He had yet one, a beloved son: he sent him last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours" (Mt 21<sup>37ff.</sup> = Mk 12<sup>6ff.</sup> = Lk 20<sup>13ff.</sup>). Here is the description of a Sonship which belongs to One alone. Jesus is the Son in a sense which no other can share.

The same teaching is given in the Parable of the Marriage Feast, which tells of "a certain king, which made a marriage feast for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage feast: and they would not come" (Mt 22<sup>4</sup>). Here again the Sonship is unique and the claim of allegiance is absolute.

In some passages the ideas of Sonship and Fatherhood are placed side by side. It is said, for instance, of the Final Coming that "of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mt 24<sup>36</sup> = Mk 13<sup>32</sup>). In this passage we should notice the ascending order of dignity: the angels,

the Son, the Father. The Son is above the angels: it is they who execute His commands.

Again the claim of Jesus is corroborated by the voice of the Father Himself. The voice which at the Baptism came probably to Jesus alone, bore the same witness at the Transfiguration in the presence of the three chosen disciples: "This is My beloved Son: hear ye Him" (Mt 17<sup>5</sup> = Mk 9<sup>7</sup> = Lk 9<sup>35</sup>). This form of expression was, as we have already seen, adopted by Jesus at a later date in the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. In each case there is the thought of a Divine Mission. The beloved Son is sent by the Father, and claims to speak in the Father's name.

Let us now try to understand more fully what this claim of Sonship implies. We shall learn best from a passage which lies at the very heart of the Synoptic teaching. Let us quote the entire passage, as given by St. Matthew:

"At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight. All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to

reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Mt 11<sup>25-30</sup>).

The parallel passage in the third Gospel presents no important differences, with the exception that the great invitation with which the passage closes is not given by St. Luke (Lk 10<sup>21f.</sup>).

Nothing can exceed the beauty of this appeal to the Father. It reveals a perfect intimacy and an unclouded confidence. The Son occupies a position which belongs to Him alone. He possesses that perfect knowledge of the Father which belongs to ideal Sonship. This knowledge is His, in His own right, by virtue of His essential Nature. It is His prerogative as Son.

And this is a prerogative which belongs to Him alone. No other can of himself possess a knowledge of the Father. No other possesses such a nature as will lead to a knowledge of the Father through its own inherent qualities. Man indeed may come to know the Father, but only by means of an endowment conferred upon his nature from without. It is only by means of a revelation bestowed by the Son that the Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, can be known. Such knowledge is no product of worldly wisdom. It is hid from



the wise and prudent, and is revealed to babes. The Son, speaking in the heart of those whose spiritual perception enables them to understand, brings men to the knowledge of the Father. Here indeed we are at the very core of the mysticism of the Gospel. Everything is seen to centre in the Person of Jesus.

Jesus, as Son, is the revealer of the Father. And through this revelation He gives to man the key to the meaning of life. His great invitation is, "Come unto Me." Through Him the sorrows and burdens of life have their bitterness removed. Rest is given to the weary through bearing the yoke of Jesus. For the path of discipleship is the way along which Jesus leads men to the knowledge of the Father.

Jesus then, as Son, claims to be the personal agent through whom man's deepest needs are satisfied. To Him is committed authority to do that which man supremely needs. All things have been delivered unto Him of His Father.

It is to be noted that this supreme revelation of the Godhead in relation to man is given under a metaphor drawn from family life. Human instinct tells us that family life only finds its ideal in perfect love. The several members of the family are to be mutually united in the bonds of love. Clearly, then, the fundamental thought which underlies this great passage is the supreme



fact of love. They who are revealed to us under the terms of Father and Son are united in the bond of a mutual love, of which the most perfect human love is but the faintest reflection. And thence love goes forth from the Godhead to embrace mankind.

Teaching so deeply mystical would not at first be fully apprehended in all its bearing. But little by little it became widely realised that in giving such teaching Jesus was making inferentially a tremendous claim. So the demand grew for an explicit statement as to what His words were intended to convey.

We come, therefore, to the public avowal of Divine Sonship in answer to the direct question of the High Priest. St. Mark here probably keeps nearest to the original tradition: "The High Priest asked Him, and saith unto Him, Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am" (Mk 14<sup>61</sup>). St. Luke replaces the original Jewish phrase "the Son of the Blessed" by its equivalent, and renders the question, "Art Thou then the Son of God?" (Lk 22<sup>70</sup>). St. Matthew gives additional colour to the words of the High Priest, and writes: "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God" (Mt 26<sup>63</sup>).

The Synoptists are in substantial agreement. Jesus was solemnly asked whether He made the double claim to be the Messiah and also to be the

Son of God. Jesus accepted the challenge, and on each count avowed His claim.

Now the question arises as to what idea was conveyed to the minds of the chief priests by this title, "the Son of the Blessed," or, as otherwise rendered, "the Son of God." We should notice that Jesus added to His affirmation the statement: "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mt 26<sup>64</sup> = Mk 14<sup>62f.</sup> = Lk 22<sup>69</sup>). And the claim thus made and expanded was denounced as blasphemy. It was therefore regarded as in some way trenching upon the prerogative of God.

It would appear, however, that to the minds of the chief priests the crucial offence was the claim to be the Messiah; for this is the part of the claim of Jesus which they took up when, after pronouncing sentence, the members of the Sanhedrin proceeded to insult Him: "Some smote Him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, Thou Christ: who is he that struck Thee?" (Mt 26<sup>68</sup>). It is probable that the claim to be the Son of God would seem to the chief priests to be of secondary importance. They would not associate with it any idea of a unique relationship, but would rather think of it as simply indicating the bearer of a Divine mission. For them it would be included, as the less in the greater, in the claim to be the Messiah.

The claim made by Jesus at the trial before the High Priest was taken up in mockery by the chief priests and others at the Crucifixion: "If Thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. . . . He trusteth on God; let Him deliver Him now, if He desireth Him: for He said, I am the Son of God" (Mt 27<sup>40, 43</sup>). And the knowledge that Jesus had made this claim is shown by the centurion in his exclamation: "Truly this was the Son of God" (Mt 27<sup>54</sup> = Mk 15<sup>39</sup>). Here, however, the Third Gospel reads: "Certainly this was a righteous man" (Lk 23<sup>47</sup>).

The concurrence of testimony of St. Matthew and St. Mark shows that they reproduce an original tradition. Probably a different tradition reached St. Luke. He is not likely to have made such an alteration in the words ascribed to the centurion if the text was before him in the Marcan form. The variation in the form of the words is therefore carried back to a very early period in the formation of the tradition upon which the Synoptic narratives are based. But even if we accept the version upon which St. Matthew and St. Mark agree, we derive nothing from it beyond a corroboration of the already established fact that Jesus had publicly claimed the title "Son of God."

Let us now try to secure a general view of the teaching in regard to His Person and Work which

Jesus gave in this part of His Ministry with which we are now concerned. The outstanding feature in the portrait which He draws is clearly that of Divine Sonship. In claiming to be the Son of God, He is claiming to be the Messiah. For this is a Messianic title; and we accordingly find it coupled with the title of "the Christ" in the question of the High Priest at the trial. But in the mouth of Jesus the title goes much further than this. It is developed and explained as expressing a unique relation to God, a relationship which issues in an immediate knowledge of the Father, which no other can possess except through Him. And in virtue of this relationship to the Father, there is conferred upon Him a universal authority. Such is this power that through Him the ills of humanity will be redressed. It is an authority which will be exercised conspicuously at the Last Day, when He will appear in royal majesty as Universal Judge and as Arbiter of the destinies of mankind. Jesus, then, would be understood by the Jews as claiming a position absolutely unique in character and infinitely above anything that could be predicated of any other of the sons of men.

But the question now arises, how much more than this the teaching of Jesus would be held to involve in the minds of those who accepted it. Would they regard Jesus as claiming to possess

a nature essentially different from their own? The Synoptic narrative leads us to reply in the negative. We should gather that Jesus was regarded simply as a man, though endowed with a power and authority such as no other man ever had or could have. He was a man; but yet He was unique among men, and was raised infinitely above all others. It would not appear impossible to the philosophy of that age that one possessed simply of human nature should receive from God so transcendent a commission. It would seem, therefore, that the disciples did not think of Jesus as claiming to possess a nature essentially different from their own; nor, it would appear, had Jesus as yet put forward any such claim. Indeed, we may go further, and say that to have advanced a claim to be essentially Divine, at the time when He was still living under the conditions of earthly existence, would have resulted in hopeless confusion of thought in the minds of His hearers. It would have been frankly unintelligible.

Let it be clearly understood that we are here concerned not with the full truth as it presented itself to the Mind of Jesus, but with that portion of the truth which it was possible for Him to reveal while still subject to the limitations of earthly life. There is no ground for saying that the full truth as to the Person and Nature of Jesus was conveyed by the teaching which the Synoptists represent

Him as giving during the Ministry. A maturer philosophy of life and being than that which the Jews possessed shows us that the doctrine of Jesus about His Person and His Work cannot possibly be left at the point to which we have carried it. Either we must reject it as incredible, or we must acknowledge that it implies infinitely more than has yet become explicit.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MINISTRY IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

#### *The First Period*

IN passing from the Synoptic record of the Ministry of Jesus to the Fourth Gospel, we are conscious at once of a difference of atmosphere. The Teaching of Jesus is given from a different point of view from that to which the earlier narrative has accustomed us. It comes to us not as a simple historical record, but through the medium of a striking personality. We accept the traditional view that the Gospel is substantially the work of the Apostle St. John and belongs to the closing years of his life. It represents the outcome of many years of meditation upon the Teaching of Jesus to which he had listened. Guided, as we believe, by the Holy Spirit, he had come to see more and more deeply into the inner meaning and purpose of the words whose bearing could have been only in part apprehended at the time. Through this long mental and spiritual



process, it was inevitable that his own personality should be to some extent impressed upon the form which the Teaching of Jesus gradually assumed in his mind.

It does not follow from this that the form thus given to the Teaching of Jesus would be untrue. An artist as he paints a portrait impresses his own personality upon the presentment that grows under his hand. For he selects and rejects at will from the materials that lie to his hand. This detail is reproduced; that other is omitted; a third is idealised. His aim is to reveal personality and character. And so the portrait, by the very fact of its being an abstraction or an idealisation, expresses the truth in a way that no photograph can do.

St. John, then, sets himself to draw the portrait of Jesus as that portrait through long years of meditation had fixed itself in his mind. He aims at reproducing the substance of the Teaching of Jesus; and, in doing so, he gives it the form in which its meaning was best expressed to his own mind.

But while we maintain that the picture so drawn is in its broad outline essentially true, it is quite possible that it may be open to criticism in detail. And, in particular, it may be subject to criticism from the point of view of the idea which is the subject of the present study. We may ask

whether St. John's narrative shows a loss of the sense of historical perspective.

Now a loss of historical perspective is possible in two respects. St. John wrote at the close of a long life, when sixty years of the life of the Church lay, as a fertile land, behind him. During these sixty years there had been an ever-ripening knowledge and a growing understanding of the deep mysteries of the Christian Faith. For him everything was read in the light of the Resurrection and in view of the Mission of the Spirit, of whose power he was so conscious. It is therefore possible that the knowledge which came to him after the Resurrection, and which could not have come till then, may have been read into his recollection of the Teaching of Jesus. It is possible that we may find in St. John's account of the teaching of Jesus during the Ministry flashes of truth which belong only to the revelation of the Risen Life.

But, further, within the Ministry itself the same want of historical perspective may show itself. Our aim has been to draw out the progressive character of the Self-revelation of Jesus during the Ministry. It is possible that, as St. John looked back upon the Ministry over the long vista of years, and saw it as a completed whole rather than in its process, he may have ascribed to its earlier stages teaching which in fact only belonged to the later days. If, as we examine the Gospel, and

compare it with the Synoptic record, we are obliged to postulate here and there a loss of historical perspective, this will not in any way impair our conviction that the portrait as a whole is true. Indeed, we shall feel that even where we must regard the narrative as idealising and interpreting, rather than as simply recording, it is pointing towards the solution of a mystery. Apart from the solution indicated by the Fourth Gospel, the Life of Jesus would present an inexplicable enigma. Jesus, according to the Synoptic record, gives an account of Himself which cannot possibly be left at the point to which the Synoptists take us. St. John records the teaching of the same Jesus whose story is told by the Synoptists. And, while recording this teaching, he idealises and interprets it. Our contention is that the idealisation and interpretation, though they bear the impress of the Evangelist, are yet true to fact.

In examining the Synoptic record of the Ministry of Jesus, we found that a climax was reached in the great confession of St. Peter. This event marked an epoch in the progressive Self-revelation of Jesus. During the earlier period we traced a continuity of purpose in Jesus to lead the disciples to a conception of the spiritual character of His Mission, and at the same time to give a spiritual character to their Messianic hope. He

would not declare Himself to be the Christ until He had purified their expectation of what the Christ was to be. Thus He planted in them a faith which issued in the declaration of St. Peter at Cesarea Philippi. Further, we found that during this period there was probably no allusion to that unique relation to the Father which becomes prominent in the later teaching. Let us now turn to the Fourth Gospel, and see how far the picture which the Synoptists have suggested is there corroborated.

Our first task must be to delimitate our earlier period. At what point in the Fourth Gospel is the confession of St. Peter to be interposed? A fixed point common to the Synoptists and St. John is the feeding of the five thousand, which took place shortly before the Passover, in the second year of the Ministry. The Synoptic narrative requires an interval of some three or four months to elapse between this event and St. Peter's confession, which consequently probably took place in the late summer of the same year, and shortly before the Feast of Tabernacles. It is therefore to be placed in the period of which St. John says: "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for He would not walk in Judaea, because the Jews sought to kill Him" (Jn 7<sup>1</sup>). It is noticeable that St. John ascribes to St. Peter at the beginning of this period a confession very similar to that with which

the Synoptists credit him near its close: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God" (Jn 6<sup>68f.</sup>). It follows, then, that the period of the Ministry up to the confession of St. Peter is covered by the first six chapters of the Fourth Gospel. Let us see how far the teaching which Jesus is represented as giving in this part of the Gospel agrees with the conclusions to which we have been led by a study of the Synoptists.

In the opening chapter of the Gospel we have a series of remarkable testimonies to the Person and Mission of Jesus. First, there is the testimony of the Baptist, who refers to Jesus as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn 1<sup>29</sup>), and as "the Son of God": "I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (Jn 1<sup>34</sup>). Then comes the testimony of St. Andrew: "We have found the Messiah" (Jn 1<sup>41</sup>). Then there is the testimony of Nathanael, who takes up and enlarges the words of the Baptist: 'Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God: Thou art King of Israel' (Jn 1<sup>49</sup>). And finally, there is the mystical Self-revelation of Jesus Himself: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (Jn 1<sup>51</sup>). Thus,

at the very outset, in the days preparatory to the opening of the Ministry, the complete portrait is drawn: the complete revelation is given and accepted. Surely we must admit that St. John, in this presentment of the initial testimony to the Person of Jesus, has lost the sense of true historical perspective. Jesus is acknowledged at once as Lamb of God, Son of God, Messiah, King of Israel, and Son of man: and that without any preparatory discipline of the hearers, to enable them to grasp the transcendent and spiritual truths which underlie these titles. The very completeness with which the cycle of titles is rounded off is suggestive of an artificial construction of the narrative. It is history idealised. The complete portrait is drawn in the mind of the Evangelist, and he shows its outlines here at the outset: its meaning is to be progressively unfolded through the progress of the Gospel.

We pass now to the account of the cleansing of the Temple, which concerns us here as containing a reference by Jesus to His Father: "Take these things hence: make not My Father's house a house of merchandise" (Jn 2<sup>16</sup>). Spoken thus, with the claim to exercise authority, the words imply a reference to the unique relation as Son to the Father. But we have seen reason to believe that the teaching of Jesus on this relationship belongs only to the later period of the Ministry. It is quite likely that St. John has transferred to this



first cleansing of the Temple words which were used upon the occasion of the second cleansing at the close of the Ministry. It has indeed been suggested that the Synoptic narrative and that of the Fourth Gospel refer to the same event, and that one or other of the authorities has misplaced it in point of time. But a cleansing of the Temple falls in so naturally among the closing events as a conspicuous assertion of Messianic authority, that we can hardly displace it from the position which is assigned to it by the Synoptists. And, on the other hand, if we accept the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel, it is impossible to suppose that the Evangelist can have made the mistake of transferring to the beginning of the Ministry an event which in fact belonged to its close. There is, however, no difficulty in supposing that such an event took place at the beginning of the Ministry, and that circumstances and sayings really belonging to the later cleansing have been unconsciously transferred to the earlier.

We come now to the revelation of Jesus to Nicodemus. It is a revelation of His Mission rather than of His Person. In contradiction to the common rabbinical expectation of temporal blessings and a material kingdom, Jesus points to a spiritual power which transcends all natural forces. He speaks of life on a new and higher



plane. This life, which is the heavenly life, had never yet been attained. But Jesus claims to possess it in virtue of His perfect humanity, as Son of man, and as living in perfect harmony with God. "No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man [which is in heaven]" (Jn 3<sup>13</sup>). Jesus is to go forward to fulfil His Mission, of which the outcome is to be the bestowal upon others of this higher life, which He Himself possesses. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life" (Jn 3<sup>14</sup>).

Does Jesus at this early stage declare His pre-existence? It is not necessary to give His words this meaning. He has descended out of heaven. But it is possible to interpret this as simply meaning that He has come into the world charged with a Mission from God. The emphasis throughout the interview is upon His Mission rather than upon His Person. He reveals Himself as the Son of man, charged with a task for humanity, rather than as the Son of God, whose essential Nature is other than that of mankind.

The next succeeding paragraph in which the unique Divine Sonship is unfolded contains, not the words of Jesus, but the comment of the Evangelist: "God so loved the world, that He gave His

only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world ; but that the world should be saved through Him " (Jn 3<sup>16f.</sup>). Here and in the verses that follow (vv.<sup>16-21</sup>) we have St. John's explanation given in the light of subsequent knowledge ; and it involves truths which were only unfolded later.

We have a similar paragraph of comment by the Evangelist at the close of this same chapter (vv.<sup>31-36</sup>). Here the comment is suggested by the testimony of the Baptist to Jesus as the bridegroom. And the train of thought thus suggested leads once again to a statement of the essential relation of the Father and the Son, and the claims which the Son has upon the obedience of mankind. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life ; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him " (Jn 3<sup>35f.</sup>). In estimating the degree to which the Fourth Gospel fails in true historical perspective, we shall not of course put in evidence such passages as these, which are simply comment on the part of the Evangelist. St. John does not represent the teaching they contain as having been given upon the occasions with which he connects them. He is using his subsequent knowledge, and the deeper insight which had come to him with

fuller experience, to throw light upon the earlier teaching and to show the fuller revelation of which it was laying the foundation.

St. John next takes us to the narrative of the conversation of Jesus with the woman of Samaria. The narrative is remarkable as containing a direct Messianic declaration on the part of Jesus: "The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh (which is called Christ): when He is come, He will declare unto us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He" (Jn 4<sup>25f.</sup>). The woman subsequently goes into the city to meet her acquaintances with the words: "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?" (Jn 4<sup>29</sup>). Then, through intercourse with Jesus, the men express a wider belief still. They say: "Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world" (Jn 4<sup>42</sup>).

Now we must admit that such a declaration as is ascribed here to Jesus runs counter to all that we have learnt from the Synoptic narrative. There Jesus is represented as studiously avoiding the title of Messiah through all the early part of His Ministry. And even when He had led St. Peter on to confess Him as the Christ, He bids him keep this knowledge secret. He will not make the claim

openly because of the false associations that had gathered around the title.

But the Synoptic narrative is concerned for the most part with the Ministry in Galilee, and it is just possible that considerations that would be of force among a Galilean or Judean audience would not have the same force in Samaria. It is, however, difficult to suppose that Jesus would have departed so far from His constant policy at this early period of His Ministry, even in Samaria, as to openly declare Himself to be the Christ. Presumably also St. John was not himself present at this interview with the woman. The simplest theory is that he is trying as best he can to reconstruct the incident from information with which Jesus may have supplied him, and that he has by this means given a literary shape to the conversation with the woman.

We have next to examine the teaching which St. John connects with an unnamed feast at Jerusalem. There is nothing in the narrative to identify this feast, which is placed between the first and second Passovers that occurred in the period covered by the Ministry of Jesus. At this feast, in reply to the Jews, Jesus defended Himself for healing on the Sabbath by saying, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work" (Jn 5<sup>17</sup>). St. John makes a statement as to the

interpretation which the Jews put upon these words: "For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only brake the sabbath, but also called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God" (Jn 5<sup>18</sup>).

Now the question first arises whether St. John was right in his estimate of what was in the mind of the Jews. Did the Jews really regard these words as implying a claim to equality with God? A much lower interpretation of the words than this would have been sufficient to arouse their indignation. If they thought nothing more than that Jesus was claiming a special relationship of high privilege, which He held to have been conferred upon Him by God, this would have been quite enough to account for their anger.

And moreover, we have to consider the possibility that St. John himself read into the words of Jesus not merely the meaning which Jesus intended them to convey at the time, but the full meaning which subsequent knowledge and further revelation showed that they would bear.

At all events, St. John reports the comment of Jesus Himself upon this saying. Let us see what it amounts to. It implies a close and intimate relationship between the Son and the Father. This is a relation of complete dependence and perfect harmony. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing:

for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner" (Jn 5<sup>19</sup>). It is a relation of love, which shows itself in the power conferred upon the Son. This power has already found expression in the signs which have been wrought. But not yet has the full extent of the authority committed to the Son been revealed. For to the Son is committed the bestowal of the supreme gift of life, and He it is through whom the Father's judgment of mankind will be executed. Hence it follows that those who claim to honour the Father must also honour the Son (Jn 5<sup>20-25</sup>). The cardinal points insisted upon are two. First, the possession of life, which means eternal life, is predicated of the Son as a special endowment from the Father, while others are to receive this gift through Him. Secondly, there is the prerogative of judgment: "As the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself: and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of man" (Jn 5<sup>26f.</sup>).

It will at once be felt that this passage is largely parallel to the great Synoptic passage descriptive of the relation of the Son to the Father. There is the same committal of authority: "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father" (Mt 11<sup>27</sup> = Lk 10<sup>22</sup>). And the claim to execute judgment is the same as that which Jesus so frequently in the



Synoptic Gospels makes for Himself as Son of man. The distinctive thought of the Fourth Gospel is that of the possession of life as an essential characteristic of the Son and the bestowal of this gift upon mankind through Himself. This teaching, indeed, upon the supreme gift of life is woven into the innermost texture of the teaching of St. John.

But in all this setting forth of the relation of the Son to the Father, and the power which is vested in the Son, we may say that the question of the essential nature of the Son does not really emerge. The emphasis is upon the Mission which has been laid upon the Son, and the authority which that Mission carries with it. Nothing is said as yet as to the essential nature of His Person. The Son appears as One who has been invested with a unique Mission by the Father, and who therefore occupies a unique position and fulfils a unique function. All this is really parallel to the teaching of the Synoptists, though in them it belongs to a later stage of the Ministry, and even then is less fully developed. The special contribution which the Fourth Gospel makes to our understanding of the Mission of Jesus is its teaching upon the subject of the bestowal of eternal life.

This is the point which is emphasised and elaborated in the great discourse which St. John



connects with the feeding of the five thousand. The gift of eternal life is to be bestowed upon believers through their union with Himself. So Jesus opens His discourse by directing the attention of the people to this gift, which comes through Him: "Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him the Father, even God, hath sealed" (Jn 6<sup>27</sup>). It will be noticed that the emphasis here is laid not upon the essential Nature but upon the Mission of Jesus. The gift is promised through Him, not in virtue of His Nature or Person, but in virtue of the appointment of the Father.

Upon this follows the deeply mystical teaching about the Bread of Life, the Flesh and Blood of the Son of man. It tells of the bestowal upon men of the power of the Humanity of Jesus, in its completeness; it points to the assimilation within themselves of that which is in Jesus; and so it leads, through a mystical living union with Him, to the participation of His Life.

Now we must surely admit that such teaching as this, unless we empty it of almost all its meaning, is inexplicable apart from the highest transcendental doctrine of the Nature and Person of Jesus. But our contention is that no such teaching was yet given, or indeed could be given till Jesus was glorified. Not till the revelation of

the Resurrection and the Risen Life could any doctrine of the Divine Nature and Person of Jesus emerge. Accordingly, we find that to the Jews the teaching of Jesus was frankly unintelligible. "They said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how doth He now say, I am come down out of heaven?" (Jn 6<sup>42</sup>). And again, when the teaching is further developed, they ask, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" (Jn 6<sup>52</sup>). With their premisses any such notion was an impossibility. Accordingly, many of those who till then were disciples of Jesus are represented as leaving Him in consequence of this teaching. And even the Twelve are not spoken of as understanding it. They accept it because of their deep personal trust in Jesus. They felt instinctively that He had "the words of eternal life" (Jn 6<sup>68</sup>). But they did not yet possess the data that would show them how such teaching could have a real meaning.

Let us then state our conclusion with reference to the mystical teaching of this great discourse. On the one hand, unless it is to be emptied of its deepest meaning, it requires the highest doctrine of the Divine Nature and Person of Jesus; and it must therefore remain an unexplained mystery until that doctrine had been revealed. On the other hand, there was not as yet, and there could not be, any such teaching upon the Person of

Jesus; and the teaching here given did in fact remain a mystery till after the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Here, as before, emphasis is laid not upon the Person, but upon the Mission of Jesus. Jesus offers these gifts because the Mission laid upon Him by the Father authorises Him to do so. "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me" (Jn 6<sup>57</sup>). The Father has sent Him: that fact is proclaimed. The promise of the gift of life and the conditions of the gift must be taken on trust, till the full doctrine could be revealed.

We have already noticed that in the conversation with Nicodemus, as recorded by St. John, Jesus seems to speak of a pre-existence before His life in the world. So again it is here. "I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (Jn 6<sup>38</sup>). And again He asks of the Jews, "What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where He was before?" If St. John is here reporting Jesus aright, we must admit that a point has been touched beyond what the Synoptists include in their representation of the Self-revelation of Jesus during the Ministry. But even so, the idea of pre-existence would not, to Jewish minds, carry with it a claim to Divinity. Such a claim would to them be

unthinkable, as conflicting, they would suppose, with monotheism. But the idea of pre-existence was familiar to them. In at least some schools of Jewish thought pre-existence was predicated of the Messiah.

We have now reached the point in St. John's narrative which corresponds to the division which the Synoptic narrative led us to make in the Ministry of Jesus. Let us sum up the conclusions to which a comparison of the Fourth with the earlier Gospels has led us. We certainly do not find in St. John's narrative the same progressive unfolding of the teaching of Jesus about Himself that marks the Synoptic account. The marked reticence which is ascribed to Jesus in the early part of the Ministry by St. Mark and St. Luke, and to a less extent by St. Matthew, is hardly observable in the Fourth Gospel. No doubt the difference in the description of the early teaching may be to some extent accounted for by the fragmentary character of the Synoptic tradition, and may be partly due to a difference of audience. It is natural to suppose that the teaching given to an educated audience in Jerusalem would differ in character and substance from that given to the peasants of Galilee. But such a consideration cannot go all the way in accounting for the difference between the Synoptic and Johannine discourses. And indeed we have to remember that

the memorable instruction upon the Bread of Life was given to just such a Galilean audience as that which listened to the Synoptic parables by the lake side.

It appears, then, that we must admit a distinct loss of true historical perspective in the Johannine account of the early period of the Ministry of Jesus. St. John ascribes to the early teaching elements of Self-revelation which did not in fact find expression till a later date. How far this criticism of the Fourth Gospel should extend it is probably not possible to say. No doubt the deep spiritual capacity of St. John would enable him to see more deeply than others into the full meaning of the words of Jesus. And it is possible that in places where his account of the teaching of Jesus differs from that given by the Synoptists, he is only rendering explicit a revelation that was implicitly contained in the earlier teaching, but which the framers of the common tradition failed to grasp.

But let us now for a moment put aside the question of progressive development in the teaching of Jesus, and compare the revelation which we have found in the early Johannine discourses with that which is contained in the entire Synoptic account of the Ministry. We find in St. John a far fuller account of the meaning, purpose, and power of the Mission of Jesus. This is especially

developed from the point of view of the gift of eternal life, which comes through Him. And there is the mystical conception of the union of Jesus with the believer and the participation in the powers of His complete humanity. But this aspect of the Self-revelation of Jesus is developed from the side of His Mission rather than from the side of His Person. And though the idea of pre-existence is introduced, there is no revelation of the possession of a Nature essentially different from that of man. No doubt the truths revealed must remain inexplicable till such a revelation has been given, and men must continue to ask, "How can it be?" And without doubt St. John's mind was permeated through and through with his knowledge, subsequently gained, of the Person of Christ. And no doubt this knowledge, from which it was impossible for him to detach himself, must have to some extent moulded the form which after long reflection he gave to the discourses of Jesus. We may therefore accept the conclusion that Jesus, while in fact He unfolded the meaning and character of His Mission and its results more fully than the Synoptic narrative of the Ministry would have led us to suppose, did not give during this early period of the Ministry any revelation of the possession of a Nature essentially different from that of mankind.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE MINISTRY IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

#### *The Second Period*

AT the close of the period in which St. Peter's great confession must be placed, St. John takes up the narrative at the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem. The teaching given at this feast occupies the whole of the seventh and eighth chapters. It is marked by the same sense of a close intimacy between the Son and the Father; and once again we find a reiteration and expansion of the central Synoptic passage. The truth is emphasised that knowledge of the Father can come only through the Son. And so Jesus says to the Jews, "Ye know neither Me, nor My Father: if ye knew Me, ye would know My Father also" (Jn 8<sup>19</sup>).

Jesus now refers with renewed emphasis to His Mission. It is the Father who has sent Him (Jn 8<sup>18</sup>); He has not come of Himself (v.<sup>42</sup>); the words He speaks are those which He has received from the Father (v.<sup>26</sup>), and His actions are a carrying out of the Father's will (v.<sup>29</sup>). Since so high a



Mission has been laid upon Jesus by the Father, the effect of His presence must be correspondingly great. He has been charged to bring to men a revelation of eternal truth. Hence He is able to say, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (v.<sup>12</sup>).

But the most striking feature in the discourse at the Feast of Tabernacles is the emphasis which Jesus now lays upon His pre-existence: "I know whence I came and whither I go" (v.<sup>14</sup>). And then more definitely: "I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of Myself, but He sent Me" (v.<sup>42</sup>). If these words had stood alone, it might have been said that Jesus was only referring to the coming forth to His Ministry when at His Baptism there was given to Him the consciousness of receiving a call from God. But He excludes any such limitation of His meaning by closing the discourse with a statement which admits of no such interpretation: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (v.<sup>58</sup>).

Now it may be maintained that Jesus in saying this is merely claiming that He stands for eternal principles. The principles embodied in His teaching are not arbitrary or changing: they do not belong to a temporary phase, as did the covenant associated with Abraham. They did not come into being: they "are." For they embody eternal truth.

But it will probably be felt that to explain the words of Jesus as referring solely to an ideal pre-existence, such as this, is not satisfactory. We feel obliged to take the words in their natural sense. Jesus is claiming a personal pre-existence; and moreover, a pre-existence of which no beginning is predicated. But again, let us remember that pre-existence was already regarded as an attribute of the Messiah, and Jesus, in making the assertion, is claiming no more than the Messiah was allowed, in Jewish thought, to possess.

In the Last Discourses the doctrine of pre-existence again becomes prominent. Jesus speaks in parallel terms of His coming from the Father and His return: "I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father" (Jn 16<sup>28</sup>). He implies that just as the life to which He is going is a personal life of intercourse with the Father, so He had a personal existence in communion with the Father before the period of His earthly life. In response to this statement, the disciples confess their faith: "Now know we that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee: by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God" (Jn 16<sup>30</sup>). To this confession of faith Jesus refers in the great high-priestly prayer: "The words which Thou gavest Me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of

a truth that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me" (Jn 17<sup>s</sup>). And in this same prayer the pre-existence of Jesus is carried back beyond the creation of the world. Jesus speaks of the glory which He had with the Father "before the world was" (Jn 17<sup>s</sup>).

After the account of the Feast of Tabernacles, the scene changes to the Feast of Dedication in the winter of the same year. For it would appear that the ninth and tenth chapters of the Gospel are both to be associated with this feast. In this section we find a direct assertion of Divine Sonship. St. John is relating the incident of the healing of the man who had been born blind. This man had been put out of the synagogue by the Jews. Jesus sought him out and said to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"<sup>1</sup> The man answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe on Him?" Jesus said, "Thou hast both seen Him, and He it is that speaketh with thee" (Jn 9<sup>35ff.</sup>). There is no difficulty in accepting the statement of St. John that this claim was explicitly made at this late period of the Ministry. What Jesus meant by the claim will appear from a consideration of the remarkable controversy with which the teaching given at the Feast of Dedication closes. This controversy we now have to examine.

<sup>1</sup> The reading, however, is uncertain. WH read "The Son of man."

We start with the assertion of Jesus: "I and the Father are one" (Jn 10<sup>30</sup>), and we have to inquire what claim Jesus intended to make when He used these words. St. John states that the Jews interpreted the saying as meaning that Jesus was claiming to be Divine. "The Jews" he says, "took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them: Many good works have I shewed you from the Father, for which of those works do ye stone Me? The Jews answered Him: For a good work we stone Thee, not for that thou sayest, and because that Thou sayest a man maketh Himself God." (Jn 10<sup>31-33</sup>). But Jesus refused to accept this interpretation of His words. This was not the meaning He intended to convey. Let us quote His reply to the Jews: "Jesus answered them: Is it not written in your law, I said: Ye are gods? If He called them gods, and the word of God abideth and the Scripture cannot be broken, say ye of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world: Thou blasphemest, because I said: I am the Son of God?" (Jn 10<sup>34-36</sup>). Jesus then challenges the interpretation which the Jews had put on His words. He states that He was claiming a rank only the Father ascribes to that in which the Jewish appointed judges of the Old Testament spoke of God. And He explains this further as a relation founded upon the Mission for which God had sanctified Him and which He

had now laid upon Him. So, once again, we find that what Jesus is desirous to teach is not the meaning of His Person, but the fact and purport of His Mission. He claims the title Son of God on the ground that God has laid upon Him a unique Mission, in virtue of which He is set apart from all others. He is therefore one with the Father, who has designated Him for this work.

It must not, of course, be supposed that Jesus is denying that He is God. He is simply denying that the question as to His essential Nature had entered into His words. The question had simply not arisen. Jesus would not raise it until the time had come when the truth could be intelligible. It must wait to be proclaimed till after the Resurrection.

Meantime, the teaching at the Feast of Tabernacles has added more to the revelation of Jesus upon the meaning of His Mission. There is the allegory of the sheep. Jesus is the Door of the sheep: for in Him is the entrance to eternal life (Jn 10<sup>7</sup>). He is the Good Shepherd, who lays down His life for the sheep (Jn 10<sup>11</sup>). And this He does in discharge of the Mission laid upon Him by His Father (Jn 10<sup>36</sup>). Thus, once again, from the point of view of the Mission of Jesus, emphasis is laid upon the gift through Him of eternal life. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life" (Jn 10<sup>27</sup>).

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from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him. Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from Myself: but the Father abiding in Me doeth His works" (Jn 14<sup>7ff.</sup>).

The entire high-priestly prayer breathes this same spirit of complete harmony with the Father. It shows itself especially in the petition that there may be the same bond of unity among believers as that which subsists in perfection of fellowship between the Father and the Son. We have first the prayer for the disciples themselves: "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as we are" (Jn 17<sup>11</sup>). The allusion again is to the Mission which has been given by the Father, in virtue of which the disciples have been gathered together and brought into one fellowship. Then the thought is further developed, and is applied to those who were to be led to believe in Jesus through the preaching of the first disciples. The prayer of Jesus is that they also may be one, "even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us: that the world may believe that

Thou didst send Me " (Jn 17<sup>21</sup>). Here once again we get back to the thought of the Mission bestowed by the Father.

Next let us notice how Jesus emphasises the power which is His in virtue of His Mission. "All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine" (Jn 16<sup>15</sup>), says Jesus to the disciples. And again, in the high-priestly prayer He thus addresses the Father: "All things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine: and I am glorified in them" (Jn 17<sup>10</sup>). But we have already heard this in the central Synoptic passage: "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father (Mt 11<sup>25</sup> = Lk 10<sup>22</sup>).

The greatness of the Mission leads up to the thought of the greatness of Him who has given the Mission. Jesus looks forward to returning to the Father when the work with which He is charged is completed, and so He says to the disciples: "If ye loved Me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I" (Jn 14<sup>28</sup>).

Now it is said that in making this comparison Jesus is implicitly claiming to be Divine. The reason given for this inference is that otherwise the comparison would be meaningless. Certainly it would be a pointless assertion to state baldly that God is greater than man. But the underlying

thought in the mind of Jesus is not that of Godhead or Manhood: the comparison arises simply out of the thought of the Mission which fills His mind. The major premiss in the argument is this, that he who bestows a mission is greater than he who receives it. The Father who has bestowed a Mission upon the Son is greater than the Son who receives this Mission and executes it in obedience to the Father. Hence these words of Jesus are not to be taken as bearing upon the question of the essential Nature of the Son. This question does not arise.

We come now to the revelation by Jesus of an extension of His Mission. Out of His Mission is to arise the Mission of the Paraclete, who is to be sent in His name: "The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (Jn 14<sup>26</sup>). Indeed, in such close relation does the Mission of the Paraclete stand to the Mission of Jesus, that Jesus declares that He Himself will send the Paraclete: "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me" (Jn 15<sup>26</sup>). The Mission of the Paraclete will be to carry forward and give effect to the work of Jesus. And Jesus

too will carry on His work, though in another sphere. For He goes to prepare a place for His disciples (Jn 14<sup>2</sup>).

We have now examined the Johannine presentation of the Self-revelation of Jesus up to the close of the Ministry; and we have found very little in the records of the later stages of the Ministry which goes beyond the Self-revelation that was implicitly contained in the first six chapters. These, it will be remembered, carried us up to the crisis of St. Peter's confession. Certainly the truths taught in outline, or only implicitly, in the earlier discourses are in the later chapters more fully developed. The doctrine of pre-existence, for instance, becomes more definite and more extended. The scope and effect of the Mission of Jesus is fully revealed under an abundance of allegory and metaphor. The relation of the Son to the Father is regarded from fresh points of view. The Mission of the Paraclete appears as standing in close relation to the Mission of Jesus. Throughout the whole Gospel the gift of eternal life stands out conspicuously as the great and abiding consequence of the Mission of the Son: this is no less conspicuous in the early discourses than it is in the later.

As a result of this analysis, we cannot help feeling that the element of progress and gradual development in the Self-revelation of Jesus which

we traced clearly in the Synoptic narrative has been largely lost sight of by St. John. This indeed is hardly to be wondered at. Looking back as he did over a long span of years, and interpreting, as was inevitable, the sayings of Jesus in the light of the fuller revelation which he had subsequently received, he seems to have read into the earlier teaching truths which in fact were only proclaimed at a later time.

It is probable that there is a large subjective element in the Johannine discourses. The Fourth Gospel is, at least in some measure, an idealisation of the life and teaching of Jesus rather than strict history. How far the subjective element extends it is impossible to say.

But to admit this is not to say that the Gospel is untrue. On the contrary, those who believe in the Mission of Jesus and in the Mission of the Paraclete, whose work it is to guide men into all the truth, will feel that in this Gospel we have an interpretation of the Life and Teaching of Jesus which is essentially true. We do not claim for it a photographic accuracy in reproduction of detail, or even an accurate presentation of the method of Jesus. But we do say that a true spiritual insight has enabled St. John to look beneath the form of the Message and to present to us its eternal significance.

In comparing the Fourth Gospel with the

Synoptist narratives, we have seen that St. John fails to bring out as clearly as do the earlier Gospels the progressive element in the Teaching of Jesus. Let us turn now from the mode of presenting the revelation to a comparison of the Gospels in regard to the sum-total of truth that is revealed. A careful examination of the words attributed to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel has shown us that the question of His essential Nature does not really arise. He is the Son of God: and, as such, He claims a unique prerogative, a relationship which He shares with no other. But this Sonship with God is thought of as revealing, not His Nature, but His Mission. The question of the essential Nature of Jesus does not really arise in the Johannine discourses of the Ministry any more than it does with the Synoptists. The final charge brought against Jesus, as stated in the Fourth Gospel, is exactly the same as that which we have already found in the earlier Gospels: "He made Himself the Son of God" (Jn 19<sup>7</sup>). The difference between the two presentations of the teaching of Jesus is that St. John expresses with greater fulness the effect and power of His Mission, and the Person of Jesus is invested with greater mystery. The discourses of the Fourth Gospel do indeed present a problem, but they offer no hint of the solution of the problem. They do not anticipate the Self-revelation of Jesus, which could only be

given through and after the Resurrection. In this the Fourth Gospel shows a fundamental agreement with the Synoptists. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; He is charged with a Mission of overwhelming importance, and is invested with transcendent authority. Such is the summary of His Self-revelation in all the Gospels alike. We now pass to the mighty event of the Resurrection, through which came the further revelation, showing how it could be that Jesus could make for Himself so tremendous a claim.



## CHAPTER V

### THE RESURRECTION

JESUS during the Ministry made, as we have seen, claims of overwhelming magnitude for the Mission with which He had been charged by the Father. The functions which this Mission involves are, we may well say, of practically infinite extent. But whatever may be the truth as to the essential Nature and Personality of Jesus, the teaching upon this subject did not become explicit during the period covered by the Ministry. The high authority which Jesus asserted, and the tremendous functions which He claimed, were regarded as arising out of the Mission which the Father had laid upon Him, rather than as flowing from His own Personality. It was left for later reflection to consider what kind of Nature and Personality were postulated by such claims. But in the meantime the claims themselves were advanced without any scientific co-ordination. There was no attempt as yet made to show how such prerogatives could meet in One who presented Himself in human nature.

Before any such explanation could be given, a further revelation was necessary, which should have the effect first of authenticating the claims which had been made, and then of throwing light upon the question how such claims could possibly be true. The further revelation that was necessary was the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

It is true that the Resurrection had been foretold by Jesus, and foretold more than once, during the Ministry. But no mere statement before the event could possibly convey any real conception of the truth and its significance. Indeed, the announcement fell almost on deaf ears, and was only recalled when the prophecy had been fulfilled.

Let us then see what our records teach us as to the character of the Resurrection. Here again, as in our examination of the teaching of the Ministry, it will be convenient to consider separately the Synoptic records and the narrative of St. John.

St. Mark's Gospel has lost its original ending, and consequently has nothing to tell us beyond the bare fact of the Resurrection. For the existing ending, both in its longer and its shorter form, belongs to the second century, and therefore lies outside our present inquiry. St. Mark, then, has no information to give us upon the character of the Risen Life of Jesus, as inferred from the manner of His appearances.

But from the narratives of St. Matthew and St.

Luke we learn that the conditions of life after the Resurrection were entirely changed. The Body of Jesus was transformed in character and appearance. Thus the two disciples on the road to Emmaus failed to recognise Him as He walked with them and spoke to them of the Christ (Lk 24<sup>16</sup>). But their subsequent recognition of Him was as significant as the failure to recognise Him on the way. He was known through the characteristic action of the breaking of the bread (Lk 24<sup>31</sup>). It was only through the awakening of a spiritual perception that Jesus could be recognised under the changed conditions of the Risen Life. And in accordance with this same necessity we find that when Jesus appeared to the disciples on the mountain in Galilee, there were some that doubted (Mt 28<sup>17</sup>). They did not possess that spiritual perception without which no recognition of Him was possible.

We may indicate in some measure the change that had passed over the Body of Jesus, by saying that the Body was now spiritualised. It was no longer subject to the conditions of space; it was no longer bound by the limitations of matter. Jesus could suddenly disappear from view. When the two disciples at Emmaus recognised Him, "He vanished out of their sight" (Lk 24<sup>31</sup>).

He could as suddenly appear. When the two returned to Jerusalem, they came to the room where the Eleven were gathered together; and

while they were speaking of the events that had happened, Jesus appeared in the midst (Lk 24<sup>36</sup>).

But the Body of Jesus, though spiritualised, was real. Proof of this was deliberately offered by Jesus. The disciples were bidden to handle Him and see. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold Me having" (Lk 24<sup>39</sup>). And, further, He took food and did eat before them (Lk 24<sup>43</sup>).

Jesus, then, in His human Body had conquered death and stood before the disciples in a new and glorified life. It was a revelation which transcended all experience, and it was given in such a way as to leave no doubt as to its reality (Ac 1<sup>3</sup>). Thus it served the purpose of authenticating the claims made by Jesus during the Ministry. Jesus had won the supreme victory over death. He had emerged triumphant from the great conflict. And standing thus before the disciples in a life that was incontestably real, but yet under conditions which lifted His being above the limitations of matter and space, He showed Himself as the Resurrection and the Life. By His Resurrection He had made good His claim to the allegiance and belief of men. He had established the truth of the tremendous assertions He had made during the Ministry as to the Mission with which He had been charged by the Father, and the functions and powers which had been entrusted to Him.

Accordingly, the appearances to the disciples give

occasion for the reassertion of these claims under certain of their aspects. He speaks as the Christ, and reaffirms the content of the Messianic work, exaltation through death. "Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?" (Lk 24<sup>26</sup>). And again more fully: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Lk 24<sup>46f.</sup>). Thus the outcome of His Mission is the possibility of forgiveness of sins to all mankind.

The Mission of Jesus was then to be carried forward through the mission of the Apostles. They had been witnesses of the Death and of the fact of the Resurrection (Lk 24<sup>48</sup>). They were to go out into all the world to bear this witness to Him (Mt 20<sup>19</sup>, Ac 1<sup>8</sup>). He Himself was to constitute the centre of their message. Remission of sins was to be in His name (Lk 24<sup>47</sup>).

While Jesus bases His Mission explicitly upon the fact that He is the Christ, He at the same time connects the execution of it with the doctrine of His Divine Sonship. When speaking of His work in sending the Holy Spirit, He appeals to the relation of Fatherhood in which God stands to Him: "Behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you" (Lk 24<sup>49</sup>). There is, however, some

doubt whether the phrase in this form is original, for when St. Luke alludes to it again in the Acts, it appears as "the promise of the Father" (Ac 1<sup>4</sup>), not "My Father." If these words represent the saying as actually used by Jesus, it would follow that He was referring, not to the special relation in which He Himself stood to God, but to God's universal Fatherhood to mankind as a whole.

But in any event we have in St. Matthew's Gospel an assertion of Divine Sonship in the formula of Baptism, prefaced by a claim to the endowment of supreme authority: "Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you" (Mt 28<sup>18ff.</sup>). There is no reasonable ground for doubting the authenticity of these words. They undoubtedly belong to the original Gospel of St. Matthew, the documentary evidence being unimpeachable. And moreover, they harmonise perfectly with the teaching of Jesus in the Ministry, as given in the Synoptic tradition. For Jesus has already appeared there as the Son, endowed with a wholly unique Mission by the Father, and invested with powers and functions such as no

other can possibly approach. Baptism into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost goes no further than to imply an acceptance of those claims which had been already advanced. It sets a seal upon the Synoptic tradition. And indeed, the universal practice and belief of the Apostolic Church in regard to baptism makes it practically certain some such command as this was given in some such terms as are here recited by St. Matthew.

We must note, also, as bearing upon the character of the Mission of Jesus, His promise of perpetual presence. He who at the end of the world will be the universal Judge, will till then bestow His unfailing presence upon the Church: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Mt 28<sup>20</sup>).

We have tried to show that the process by which Jesus revealed Himself and unfolded His Mission to the Apostles was in fact very gradual. But yet, even so, the apprehension of the truths revealed lagged far behind the unfolding of them. Even at the very moment of the Ascension, the disciples showed that they had not really grasped the essentially spiritual character of His Mission. They had not even then rid themselves of their national and temporal expectations. So they asked: "Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Ac 1<sup>6</sup>).



But though their apprehension was so imperfect, the facts were now all in their hands. They had listened to the marvellous setting out of His claims by Jesus in the teaching during the Ministry; they were witnesses to the Resurrection, in all its glory and spiritual significance, whereby Jesus had given proof of His right to be believed in regard to the claims He had made. Here were the facts upon which reflection was to work, under the God-given guidance of the Holy Spirit, who was shortly to be bestowed upon the Church. But as yet the materials which the Life and Teaching and Resurrection of Jesus had given were quite unco-ordinated. The Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, would be charged with the task of elucidating the meaning and consequences of the tremendous statements which had been made and of the marvellous Life which had been revealed. This task could only be carried out gradually and stage by stage.

But before we pass on to consider the process of reflection upon the facts already given, let us note how the teaching upon the Resurrection which we have derived from the Synoptists is accurately confirmed by St. John.

The narratives of the Fourth Gospel bring out clearly the essential truth that the Resurrection was a spiritual fact. This appears to be almost

certainly the meaning underlying the description in which such emphasis is laid upon the position of the grave-clothes (Jn 20<sup>7</sup>).<sup>1</sup> St. John says that he "saw and believed" (Jn 20<sup>8</sup>). That is, St. John, looking back over the long vista of years, ascribed his first insight into the meaning of the Resurrection to what he saw in the untenanted grave. He implies that the linen cloths were lying in the place of burial, just where they had been when they enfolded the Body of Jesus. They bore witness to the fact that the Body had passed away from them, leaving them undisturbed. Hence it followed that the Body was now spiritualised. It was no longer subject to the restraints of matter. Under its new conditions it had entered where limitations of space are not.

It is hardly necessary to suppose that all this was at once realised by St. John when first the grave-clothes were seen by him. But there seems little doubt that he wishes to imply that their position in the grave was a sign of which the meaning became clear in the light of subsequent events. It was then recognised as revealing a transcendent spiritual truth.

Thus, at the outset of the Resurrection narratives, as told by St. John, we are prepared for an insistence upon the spiritual character of the Resurrec-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lk 24<sup>12</sup>, where, however, the text is of doubtful genuineness.

tion. Accordingly, we find, as in the Synoptic Gospels, that recognition of the Risen Jesus depends upon the awakening of spiritual faculties. Mary Magdalene fails to recognise Him till He calls her by name, and thus induces a spiritual contact with Himself (Jn 20<sup>14ff.</sup>). And then the lesson of the spiritualising of His presence is taught by His prohibition: "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father" (Jn 20<sup>17</sup>). He is no longer to be known under temporal and material conditions, but through the faculties of the spiritual life. The same truths are brought out in the narrative of the appearance by the Sea of Galilee, when Jesus stood on the beach, but "the disciples knew not that it was Jesus" (Jn 21<sup>4</sup>).

Again, as in the Synoptic Gospels, we have the sudden appearance and disappearance of Jesus, "the doors being shut," indicating just as before that the life of the Resurrection Body is not subject to material conditions (Jn 20<sup>19, 26</sup>).

Turn now to the commission given to the disciples: "Jesus said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them: whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (Jn 20<sup>21ff.</sup>). Here

again we have essential agreement with the Synoptic narrative, though another aspect of the great commission now finds expression. He who declared that as Son of man on earth He had power to forgive sins, now commits the same judicial authority to His Church (cf. Mt 16<sup>19</sup> 18<sup>18</sup>). And as in the narrative of St. Luke (Ac 1<sup>11</sup>), so in the Fourth Gospel, the commission given to the Apostles, and through them to the Church, leads on to the thought of the Return. Jesus, who has triumphed over death, and whose triumph finds a symbolic consummation in the Ascension to the right hand of God, will one day come again to His waiting Church (Jn 21<sup>22</sup>).

Thus the Johannine narrative draws again the same lines that appear in the Synoptic portrait of the Risen Life, only with greater fulness of detail and with more intent to interpret the meaning.

The Gospels agree in showing that the revelation of the Risen Life of Jesus led the Apostles to give to Jesus their wondering and reverent allegiance. They admitted His unique authority; they accepted the truth of His Mission. They believed that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (Jn 20<sup>31</sup>).

But it would appear that their belief, so far, consisted in an acceptance of the Mission of Jesus, as described by Himself. The Resurrection was regarded as an authentication of the claims of

Jesus, as One chosen and sent by God and charged with functions that were altogether unique. We shall find that this account of the belief of the disciples is required by the tone and substance of the early preaching, which we shall proceed to examine in the next chapter.

And this fact must govern our interpretation of the exclamation of St. Thomas as reported in the Fourth Gospel. At the manifestation to him of Jesus in the Risen Life, St. Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God" (Jn 20<sup>28</sup>).

It may be doubted whether we have here in the words of the Greek Gospel an accurate representation of the words which St. Thomas uttered. He bears an Aramaic name, and we may presume he spoke in Aramaic. It was probably some startled exclamation expressive of the deepest wonder and awe: "My Lord God!" The invocation of the name of God would be an ejaculatory address to the Eternal God, who had vouchsafed to him so tremendous a revelation. It would thus not be addressed to the Risen Jesus, and is not to be taken as expressing a conviction, suddenly arrived at, that Jesus Himself is God. This seems to be the most probable account to give of the words that were forced from his lips at a moment of overwhelming wonder and joy.

On the other hand, however, there is no doubt that St. John intends to make a different use of

the expression of St. Thomas. He regards it as the climax of his Gospel, and with it the Gospel, as originally written, finds a fitting close: for the twenty-first chapter is an afterthought, a later addition. He tells us that his aim had been so to write as to lead men to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Jn 20<sup>31</sup>); and we need not doubt that he uses the title "Son of God" in the full meaning which Christian thought in the first century recognised must be attached to it. He wishes to produce belief in Jesus as the Eternal Son, co-essential with the Eternal Father. And he reports the exclamation of St. Thomas in a form which would express this tremendous truth. Thus he indicates the full faith in the Eternal Person of Jesus which he, together with the whole Church of the Apostolic Age, had come to recognise as absolutely required by the tremendous claims which Jesus had made in His Ministry, and which by His Resurrection He had established.

We must believe that St. John fails to keep a true historical perspective when he ascribes to St. Thomas the use of an expression which would naturally be taken as attributing to Jesus Divine Nature as well as a Divine Mission. But, on the other hand, we need not doubt that the use of the title "the Lord," as applied to Jesus, dates from the appearances after the Resurrection. It is uncertain whether it belongs to the true text in



the words ascribed by St. Matthew to the angel at the tomb (Mt 28<sup>6</sup>), but it occurs in the Fourth Gospel in the narrative of the appearance at the Sea of Galilee. The disciple "whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord" (Jn 21<sup>7</sup>). In the days of the Ministry it was usual for the disciples and others to address Jesus as "Lord" (κύριε), which simply has the significance of Rabbi. But not till after the Resurrection is Jesus referred to as "the Lord" (ὁ κύριος). The title implies a unique honour, which the disciples were led to offer to Him by the marvellous revelation of the Risen Life.

Let us then sum up what the Resurrection taught the disciples. They beheld Jesus glorified, His Body transformed and spiritualised. They saw in this a wonderful exaltation by the power of God, which was consummated at the Ascension into heaven.

They felt that through this triumph Jesus had vindicated His claims. He had made a claim to the possession of a unique Mission with functions transcendently great. He had made a claim to be the Life-giver; and this claim His victory over death made good. And He had made the supreme claim that it is given to Him to control the final issues of humanity as Universal Judge. Jesus then had vindicated His claims by His Resurrection.



And He is at once proclaimed as requiring allegiance. He is pre-eminently "the Lord."

But still the thought of the disciples is occupied with His Divine Mission and His personal dignity. The question as to His essential Nature has not yet arisen. The problem which the first believers had to face was the question how the great truths which had been revealed to them in Jesus could be co-ordinated. Was there any transcendent fact which they postulated, and which, when once grasped, would make the separate revealed truths fall into a consistent whole?

We now have to trace the growing apprehension of the Apostolic Church as it felt its way towards the great consolidating truth which lies behind the claims that Jesus had made.



## BOOK II

### CHAPTER I

#### THE EARLY PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES

WE have attempted so far, by a critical examination and comparison of the four Gospels, to ascertain the character of the Self-revelation of Jesus up to the time of the Ascension, and also to estimate the degree to which this Self-revelation had been apprehended by the Apostles. The accuracy of the conclusions at which we have arrived will now be tested by our examination of the earliest preaching of the Apostles themselves. For their earliest preaching will be an expression of the mental and spiritual state which they had reached after the Ascension. They preached the gospel as Jesus had delivered it to them and as they apprehended it in the light of the Resurrection. They preached with heart and mind illuminated by the Holy Spirit, bestowed upon them at Pentecost. So, as time went on, under the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit, they learnt to see

more and more deeply into the meaning of the revelation of Jesus and to understand more fully His Person and His Work.

But though from the very beginning the apprehension of the Apostles would thus deepen and grow, the point at which the preaching started would be the embodiment of that degree of understanding which had been reached on the date of the Ascension. Certainly the first preaching would not fall below that standard. And consequently an examination of the contents of the earliest preaching will show whether we have been right in limiting, as we have done, the degree to which the Apostles by this time had apprehended the Self-revelation of Jesus.

Now we find that the central pivot upon which the earliest teaching hinges is the fact of the Resurrection. The Apostles come back to this fact again and again. The disciple who is to be chosen to make up the number of the Twelve must have this qualification, says St. Peter, that he "compained with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that He was received up from us" (Ac 1<sup>22</sup>). And the reason for possessing this qualification was that he might be a witness to the fact of the Resurrection. Twice in the course of his speech at

Pentecost St. Peter recurs to the Resurrection: God raised up Jesus, "having loosed the pangs of death" (Ac 2<sup>24</sup>); "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Ac 2<sup>32</sup>). The same cardinal fact is the climax of St. Peter's teaching about Jesus to the people in the Temple after the healing of the lame man. Here again he insists upon the Resurrection as the work of God, and claims to be able to give his personal testimony to the fact (Ac 3<sup>15</sup>). The same statement is reiterated in the defence before the Sanhedrin (Ac 4<sup>10</sup>). And after the release of St. Peter and St. John, the teaching of the whole company of the Twelve is thus summed up: "With great power gave the Apostles their witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all" (Ac 4<sup>33</sup>). Once more: in the instruction of Cornelius, St. Peter leads up to the fact of the Resurrection as a work of God, and speaks of the Apostles as specially chosen for the work of witnessing to this truth (Ac 10<sup>40</sup>).

Thus it is easy to see that in these early days the Apostles pictured the Resurrection as authenticating the claims of Jesus. We have now to ask how they regarded these claims.

Jesus was regarded as being endowed with a Mission from God. St. Peter at Pentecost speaks of Him as "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and

signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you" (Ac 2<sup>22</sup>). And in the address after the healing of the lame man, the purpose of this Divine Mission is stated: "Unto you first God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities" (Ac 3<sup>26</sup>). The Mission is given in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy (Ac 4<sup>26</sup>), and is inaugurated by a Divine anointing (Ac 4<sup>27</sup>). By this anointing the gift of the Holy Spirit was conveyed to Jesus of Nazareth, and He was endowed with power for the carrying out of His work (Ac 10<sup>38</sup>). The Mission will culminate in the execution of the office of Universal Judge. And the performance of this transcendent office is ascribed, not to the essential Nature of Jesus, but to the fact that God has designated Him for it. He is "ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" (Ac 10<sup>42</sup>).

The great present fact in the minds of the Apostles in regard to Jesus is that He is exalted to a position of unique majesty in heaven, at the right hand of God. But they regard Him as occupying this position not by a right inherent in His Personality, but by the operation of God. He is "by the right hand of God exalted" (Ac 2<sup>33</sup>); "God hath made Him both Lord and Christ" (Ac 2<sup>36</sup>); "The God of our fathers hath glorified His Servant Jesus" (Ac 3<sup>13</sup>); "He is the stone

which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner " (Ac 4<sup>11</sup>); "Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour" (Ac 5<sup>31</sup>). And, further, this belief in the exalted condition of Jesus is confirmed by objective vision. Thus Stephen, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Ac 7<sup>55f.</sup>). And also to Saul the persecutor, journeying on his way to Damascus, Jesus appeared in dazzling glory (Ac 9<sup>5</sup>).

And accordingly, to Jesus, thus believed to be exalted in glory, is ascribed the continued exercise of superhuman power. It is He who has sent His Spirit upon the Church (Ac 2<sup>33</sup>). In His Name the lame man was healed by St. Peter and St. John (Ac 3<sup>6</sup> 4<sup>10</sup>). The prayer of the Church to God is that signs and wonders may be done through the Name of His holy Servant Jesus (Ac 4<sup>30</sup>). St. Peter said to Æneas, "Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed" (Ac 9<sup>34</sup>). And straightway he arose, healed by the power of Jesus. But, in a word, universal power and supremacy is ascribed to the glorified Jesus: "He is Lord of all" (Ac 10<sup>36</sup>).

Through Jesus, and through Him alone, comes



the gift of salvation: "In none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other Name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Ac 4<sup>12</sup>). And, as part of this work of salvation, there is the means of forgiveness. The effect of the exaltation of Jesus is to make Him "a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins" (Ac 5<sup>31</sup>). And so "through His Name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins" (Ac 10<sup>43</sup>).

But the gifts that flow from the exalted Jesus are not merely negative. There is not merely the cleansing from sin: there is also the endowment of life. The special feature in the preaching of the Apostles which aroused the anger of the Sadducees was that they "proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection of the dead" (Ac 4<sup>2</sup>). And the central characteristic of the faith in Jesus is the bestowal of the gift of life. Its messages are pre-eminently words of life (Ac 5<sup>20</sup>), and the acceptance of the faith through repentance is the pathway to life (Ac 11<sup>18</sup>).

But from the outset this involves allegiance to Jesus. Admission to the privileges of the faith is by baptism in His Name unto remission of sins (Ac 2<sup>38</sup>), which implies submission to His authority. The act of Baptism is also viewed from a slightly different point of view as an entry into a sphere within which the claims of Jesus are

recognised. Or it is an entry into a new relation to Jesus, which gives the baptized a right to participate in His blessings. The disciple is baptized not merely in the Name (Ac 2<sup>38</sup>), but also into the Name (Ac 8<sup>16</sup>) of Jesus.

We shall be able to obtain a summary view of the way in which at this time the Apostles conceived of Jesus by noticing the titles which are given to Him. Of these the title which perhaps most strikes our attention as characteristic of this period is that of "Servant" (*παῖς*). The ultimate reference is to the Servant of Jehovah as depicted by the second "Isaiah"; and the use of the title implies that Jesus is thought of as fulfilling this group of prophecies (Ac 3<sup>13, 26</sup> 4<sup>27, 30</sup>). He is the holy Servant of the Lord, who carries out God's will and executes His purpose.

The next title, which is given as bearing upon the faith that is taught, is the title of "Christ." Jesus is the Christ of God, as having been charged with a Divine Mission and anointed thereto by God (Ac 3<sup>18</sup>). Hence this fact is regarded as central in the description of the Apostles' teaching: "They ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ" (Ac 5<sup>42</sup>). And the burden of St. Philip's preaching at Samaria is similarly described: "He proclaimed unto them the Christ" (Ac 8<sup>5</sup>).

Jesus is "the Holy and Righteous One" (Ac 3<sup>14</sup>; cf. 7<sup>52</sup>), "the Prince of Life" (Ac 3<sup>15</sup>), and "the

Son of man" (Ac 7<sup>56</sup>). The title "Son of God" occurs in a passage, that is probably interpolated, in the account of the meeting of St. Philip and the eunuch (Ac 8<sup>37</sup>); but we also find it as giving the subject of St. Paul's earliest preaching: "Straightway in the synagogue he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God" (Ac 9<sup>20</sup>).

The title, which the Fourth and, possibly also, St. Matthew's Gospel have already brought before us as given to Jesus after the Resurrection, is of constant occurrence in the early preaching of the Apostles. Not only have we the combination "the Lord Jesus" (Ac 1<sup>21</sup> 4<sup>33</sup> 7<sup>59</sup> 8<sup>16</sup>), but Jesus is spoken of simply as "the Lord," the One who in unique degree claims allegiance. This, of course, is the ordinary Jewish designation of Jehovah; and, lest there should be any doubt as to the meaning, Ananias in using the title of Jesus explains whom he is referring to: "The Lord hath sent me, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest" (Ac 9<sup>17</sup>). St. Peter definitely connects the title with the exaltation of Jesus at the Resurrection: "God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Ac 2<sup>36</sup>). Thus the title which by Jewish usage was appropriated to Jehovah becomes the recognised designation of the exalted Jesus. This is rendered the more remarkable from the fact that in this early preaching the two usages exist side by side,

without any differentiation. We have quotations from the Old Testament in which "the Lord" stands for Jehovah (Ac 2<sup>29</sup>, 21, 25 3<sup>22</sup> 4<sup>26</sup> 7<sup>49</sup>), and similarly allusions to the Old Testament, where the same usage naturally occurs (Ac 7<sup>31</sup>, 33). But the Apostles continue this usage even where there is no Old Testament connection to compel the use of the title (Ac 2<sup>39</sup> 3<sup>19</sup>). It is therefore remarkable that by the side of this appropriation of the title to Jehovah there should be a free and unqualified appropriation of the same title to Jesus. There are many passages in which this use is undoubted (Ac 9<sup>1</sup>, 10ff. four times, as is proved by 9<sup>17</sup>, 27, 35, 42 ; 11<sup>21</sup> twice, 11<sup>23</sup>, 24), and others in which it is probable (Ac 5<sup>14</sup> 8<sup>25</sup> 9<sup>31</sup>). There are other passages in which it seems impossible to say whether it is God or Jesus who is indicated by the title (Ac 2<sup>47</sup> 5<sup>3</sup>, 19 8<sup>22</sup> 12<sup>7</sup>, 11, 17, 23). Nothing surely could be more significant of the honour paid by the Apostles to Jesus and of the lofty conception they had of His Mission. But their view is as yet naive ; and their beliefs, though strongly held, are uncorrelated the one with the other. They have not yet realised what is implicit in the revelation which has been given to them, and which they have accepted with whole-hearted enthusiasm and with conviction of its truth.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PERIOD COVERED BY THE FIRST AND SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEYS OF ST. PAUL

IN the first period of Apostolic preaching which we have just passed in review, the principal figure was that of St. Peter. In the succeeding period our records relate chiefly to the teaching of St. Paul. Our authorities for the period are a section of the Acts of the Apostles, the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, and the Epistle of St. James.

St. Paul's conception of the Person and Work of Jesus follows that of St. Peter, in that the fact of the Resurrection is made the pivot on which it turns. The subject of the Resurrection is central in his presentation of the gospel. At Athens it is thus described: "He preached Jesus and the Resurrection" (Ac 17<sup>18</sup>). Indeed, so close was the association of idea, that to the minds of his Greek hearers it seemed that he was speaking of twin deities, male and female, such as were common in pagan mythology, Jesus and Anastasis.

That such an impression as this was conveyed is very significant of the high dignity which he must in fact have ascribed to the Person of Jesus. Throughout his spoken instructions and his epistles the reference is frequent to the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead by the act of God (Ac 13<sup>33</sup> 17<sup>3</sup>, 31, 1 Th 1<sup>10</sup> 4<sup>14</sup>).

In estimating the view held by St. Paul as to the Person of Jesus, important evidence is to be derived from the way in which he couples together the names of God and of Jesus in parallel terms. Here is his first greeting to the Thessalonians: "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the Church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace" (1 Th 1<sup>1</sup>). And in the opening of the Second Epistle the greeting is amplified: "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the Church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Th 1<sup>11</sup>). Such phrasing as this must imply an exaltation of Jesus to the very level of the Godhead.

Jesus in heaven is the Son of God (1 Th 1<sup>10</sup>), whose return from heaven is awaited by those who have accepted Him. And the title, thus used, certainly implies a unique relationship. But it is not clear that an eternal relationship is yet contemplated. The Sonship of Jesus is thought of in

connection with His Mission, and the Adoptionist theory is not yet excluded. Perhaps we may say that the question as to an eternal relationship had not yet emerged: the thought of the Apostles was as yet fixed only upon the present position of exalted dignity of Jesus.

But the present exaltation of Jesus, together with its future consequences, bulks large in the mind of St. Paul. Jesus is thought of, in company with the Father, as the guide of the Christian life; and to Him, as such, prayer is offered: "May our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way unto you: and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also do toward you: to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints" (1 Th 3<sup>11ff.</sup>). When we remember that in this passage "the Lord" without doubt means Jesus, we shall recognise how wide and how transcendent is the power which is here implied as belonging to and exercised by the exalted Jesus. Clearly it is a power that could only be wielded by One who is on a level with God. Parallel to this are the prayers in the Second Epistle: "Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father which loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and stablish



them in every good work and word" (2 Th 2<sup>16f.</sup>): "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ" (2 Th 3<sup>5</sup>). Thus the work of the Father and the work of Jesus are one, as also is the gift that emanates from both. It is "the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Th 1<sup>12</sup>; cf. 1 Th 5<sup>28</sup>, 2 Th 3<sup>18</sup>). And so, through the fulfilment of the Mission of Jesus, God gives effect to His will. "The will of God in Christ Jesus" finds expression in the true Christian life, which is a life of joy and thanksgiving and constant prayer (1 Th 5<sup>16ff.</sup>).

St. Paul recognises to the full the present power of the exalted Jesus, as exercised in the world. In the name of Jesus Christ the spirit of the python is cast out (Ac 16<sup>18</sup>); and in an hour of difficulty St. Paul recognises the presence of Jesus seen in vision, and receives from Him the promise that he shall be kept safe under His protection (Ac 18<sup>9</sup>). And accordingly the Christian life of faith and love and hope is lived "in our Lord Jesus Christ before our God and Father" (1 Th 1<sup>3</sup>); and the power that guides, directs, and restrains is "the Spirit of Jesus" (Ac 16<sup>7</sup>).

The power of Jesus is such that through Him salvation is given to men; and this power is emphasised by the contrast between the gospel and the law. "Be it known unto you, brethren," says St. Paul at the Pisidian Antioch, "that through this

Man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins ; and by Him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses " (Ac 13<sup>38f.</sup>). And St. Peter confirms the line taken by St. Paul in regard to the admission of Gentiles to the Church, saying, " We believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they " (Ac 15<sup>11</sup>). To the jailor at Philippi, St. Paul gives the promise : " Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved " (Ac 16<sup>31</sup>). The Thessalonians are reminded of " Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come " (1 Th 1<sup>10</sup>). And the same truth is advanced to encourage them to fight their Christian battle : " For God appointed us not to wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him " (1 Th 5<sup>9f.</sup>). This brings us back to the truth emphasised in the Fourth Gospel, that the fundamental gift of Jesus is the gift of life. The offer which the blaspheming Jews of the Pisidian Antioch had rejected was that of " eternal life " (Ac 3<sup>46</sup>). And, on the other hand, it is said of the Gentiles that " as many as were ordained to eternal life believed " (Ac 13<sup>48</sup>).

But the doctrine in regard to the exalted Jesus, which at the period we are considering bulked larger than any other in the mind of St. Paul, was

that of His return as Judge. He tells the Athenians that God "has appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained"; and he adds that the commission thus given by God has been authenticated by the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead (Ac 17<sup>31</sup>). In the Epistles to the Thessalonians this doctrine is elaborated with remarkable detail. The coming of the Lord Jesus is looked forward to as about to put the crown of completion upon St. Paul's work (1 Th 2<sup>19</sup>). Whatever we may think of the apparently material and scenic conception which St. Paul had at this time of the final Resurrection, it is at least clear that he imputes an overwhelming majesty to the exalted Jesus: "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Th 4<sup>13ff.</sup>). The final Resurrection is to issue in eternal companionship with Jesus. The day of the Resurrection is called "the day of the Lord" (1 Th 5<sup>2</sup>); so that a phrase used in the Old Testament of

Jehovah is frankly transferred by St. Paul to the exalted Jesus. And the description given of it shows that St. Paul has in his mind the apocalyptic discourses of Jesus, as recorded subsequently in the Synoptic Gospels: "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Th 5<sup>2, 4</sup>; cf. Mt 24<sup>43</sup>, Lk 12<sup>39</sup>). This "coming" of Jesus is the goal to which life and its purposes lead, and so the preparation for it is the subject of St. Paul's concluding prayer: "May your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Th 5<sup>23</sup>).

The same thought is again enlarged upon in the Second Epistle, and additional teaching is then introduced. The revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven will be in flaming fire; the sentence of punishment will be passed upon the ignorant and upon the disobedient: this punishment will consist of "eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might" (2 Th 1<sup>7ff.</sup>). The Lord from whose presence the disobedient are eternally excluded is the exalted Jesus. Hence, just as the reward of the righteous is the eternal enjoyment of the presence of Jesus (1 Th 4<sup>17</sup>), so the punishment of the wicked is the eternal exclusion from His presence (2 Th 1<sup>9</sup>). Thus Jesus stands in the closest connection with the eternal issues of life.

One other point must be added. St. Paul indi-

cates the circumstances under which he expected "the coming." When the restraining force of Roman law should be removed, then would arise a condition of moral confusion, an orgy of licence, the product of that "mystery of lawlessness" which was already at work (2 Th 2<sup>6</sup>): "And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming" (2 Th 2<sup>8</sup>). Jesus at His coming is to overthrow the fountain-head of evil.

How lofty must be the conception of the Person of Jesus that can make tolerable such a doctrine as this! Eternal life is the enjoyment of His presence; exclusion from Him is eternal death: the destruction of the spiritual fountain-head of evil is committed to Him. Such doctrine involves a Christology which must inevitably soon become explicit.

Let us turn now to the Epistle of St. James, which almost certainly belongs to the period we are considering and may well be earlier than the First Epistle to the Thessalonians.

We find that St. James has a conception of the exalted Jesus which corresponds remarkably with that which we have derived from the early teaching of St. Paul. He too couples together "God and the Lord Jesus Christ" in such a way as to show

that he regards Jesus as exalted to the very level of the Godhead (Ja 1<sup>1</sup>). With him Jesus is "the Lord of glory" (Ja 2<sup>1</sup>). He too looks forward to His return, which is at hand (Ja 5<sup>7-8</sup>). And in the meantime he is conscious of the present active power of Jesus in the ministrations of the Church. "Is any among you sick?" he asks. "Let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him" (Ja 5<sup>14f.</sup>). With the same remarkable ease that we have already found in St. Paul's writings at this period, the title "the Lord" is used indifferently by St. James both of Jesus (Ja 5<sup>7. 8. 14. 15</sup>) and of God (3<sup>9</sup> 5<sup>4. 11</sup> twice); while in other passages the reference is uncertain (Ja 1<sup>7</sup> 4<sup>10. 15</sup>). When we reflect how deeply imbued is St. James with the spirit of the Old Testament, in which the title "the Lord" stands for the ineffable Name, we shall recognise how deep is the significance of this transference of the title to the exalted Jesus. There can be no doubt that in the view of St. James Jesus was exalted to the level of the Godhead. Our examination of the succeeding period in the life of the Church will show a growing consciousness of the transcendent truth which this conviction involved.

## CHAPTER III

### THE LETTERS OF THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

OUR examination of the early preaching and writing of St. Paul has shown that from the very beginning of his ministry his whole heart and soul were possessed with a transcendent conception of the glorified Jesus. It is this tremendous conviction which supplies the motive for all that he does, and drives him forward with such fervent energy upon his work as an apostle.

We come now to the succeeding period, in which once again St. Paul is the central figure. As we pass in review the writings of this period, which extends to the close of the Third Missionary Journey, we shall watch the further unfolding of the faith of the gospel. The development we shall witness consists in a clearer realisation of what is involved in the great doctrines which have been held from the beginning. For St. Paul still bases his teaching upon the tradition which he had received (1 Co 11<sup>2-23</sup> 15<sup>1</sup>), and insists that this tradition is to



be followed. The pivot upon which his doctrine turns is still the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. This is the great outstanding fact, which both authenticates and illuminates the doctrine and claims of Jesus. Hence we find St. Paul elaborating for the Corinthians the evidence upon which he and they knew that the Resurrection was a fact (1 Co 15<sup>4-8</sup>).

The doctrine of the exaltation of Jesus appears now in a heightened form, with growing clearness. Jesus is "the Lord of glory" (1 Co 2<sup>8</sup>); and the truth thus stated is one of spiritual significance requiring for its perception spiritual capacity. Therefore, "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Ghost" (1 Co 12<sup>3</sup>). We are reminded of what the Gospels more than hint: that recognition of the Risen Jesus was only possible through the exercise of a spiritual faculty. And hence confession of the Risen Lord carries with it a saving power (Ro 10<sup>9</sup>).

The Resurrection has issued in a universal rule: Jesus "must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet" (1 Co 15<sup>25</sup>). He is the Lord both of the dead and of the living; and, once again, this sovereignty belongs to Him in virtue of His Resurrection (Ro 14<sup>9</sup>). As risen from the dead, He has power to communicate life to others, for "in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Co 15<sup>22</sup>); and by His victory over death "the last Adam became a

life-giving spirit" (1 Co 15<sup>45</sup>). He claims to exercise supremacy over the human intellect; for the Christian warfare is to issue in "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Co 10<sup>5</sup>). And St. Paul is conscious that Jesus, thus exalted, is exercising His power on earth: the "signs and wonders" which he himself is enabled to work are a witness to this fact (Ro 15<sup>1st</sup>).

We have already, in the earliest group of Pauline letters, found clear indications of a conception of the Person of Jesus which involves the coupling of His name with that of the Father, and places Him on a level with the Godhead. There was nothing tentative in such a mode of address: it was the natural expression of fundamental and old-established belief. The same trait continues to mark the epistles of the second period. The names of Jesus Christ and God the Father are linked together and are bracketed on equal terms (Gal 1<sup>1-3</sup>, Ro 17, 1 Co 1<sup>3</sup>, 2 Co 1<sup>3</sup>). And the latest Epistle of the group closes with the three-fold benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all" (2 Co 13<sup>14</sup>). Such a benediction as this can imply nothing less than a Divine appeal in each one of its clauses. Whatever may be the essential nature of the Son, about which we have yet to speak, He is clearly

thought of as exalted to the level of the Godhead. The conception of a threefold Divine power shown by this benediction has already been implied in the baptismal formula which was enunciated as the outcome of the risen life of Jesus.

The truth which is implicit in this formula is also explicitly stated. For Christ Jesus, who was raised from the dead, is now at the right hand of God (Ro 8<sup>34</sup>). To those who accept the faith He is "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Co 1<sup>24</sup>). This means that Christ stands for God's wisdom upon earth and exercises God's power among men. And it will at once be felt that such a view implies a very close relation with the Godhead. But it should also be noted that this is still connected in St. Paul's mind with the Mission that has been laid upon Jesus, rather than regarded as the outcome of His essential nature. The life of the believer proceeds from God (ἐξ αὐτοῦ) in Christ Jesus, "who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Co 1<sup>30</sup>).

Let us now examine the view which is taken of the Sonship of Jesus in the epistles of this group. Christianity is "the faith which is in the Son of God" (Gal 2<sup>20</sup>). It is "the Gospel of His Son" (Ro 1<sup>9</sup>). We are "reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (Ro 5<sup>10</sup>). The subject of St. Paul's preaching was "the Son of God, Jesus

Christ" (2 Co 1<sup>19</sup>). "When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son" (Gal 4<sup>4</sup>). So too we have the complementary truth that God is "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ro 15<sup>6</sup>). To the Son belongs a universal kingdom, which, however, will be merged finally in that of the Father (1 Co 15<sup>28</sup>). His Sonship is unique, Jesus belongs to God as "His own Son" (Ro 8<sup>32</sup>, *ὁ ἴδιος υἱός*). And this Sonship stands in contrast to the derived sonship of believers: "Ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3<sup>26</sup>). Through the Son of God we have received "the adoption of sons" (Gal 4<sup>5</sup>). And thus the Son of God is "the Firstborn among many brethren" (Ro 8<sup>29</sup>). The meaning here conveyed by this expression, "the Firstborn," is that He already existed as Son when others through Him were raised to the position of sonship. The word has Old Testament associations which determine its force. It indicates the supreme dignity of the Sonship in question (cf. Ps 89<sup>27</sup>, Ex 4<sup>22</sup>, Jer 31<sup>9</sup>). The use of the term does not necessitate an Adoptionist interpretation of the Sonship of Jesus in the mind of St. Paul; and we shall in fact find that such an interpretation is excluded by passages which we still have to examine.

We seem, indeed, to have passed beyond the Adoptionist position when we find Jesus described as "the image of God" (2 Co 4<sup>4</sup>, *εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ*).

The idea is expanded in the words that follow: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Co 4<sup>5f.</sup>). It is interesting to notice that the Logos is frequently described by Philo as "the image of God."<sup>1</sup> We have to consider what the term *εἰκών* implies. In the first place, there is the notion of resemblance. Christ is in the likeness of God. Thus in the Book of Genesis man is said to have been made "after God's image" (Gn 1<sup>27</sup>, *κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ*). And in St. Paul's teaching the goal of the believer is growth into "the image of Christ" (2 Co 3<sup>18</sup>). But there is more expressed by the phrase, as used of Christ, than the mere idea of resemblance. It includes the thought of representation. Christ represents God to man. Thus "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Co 5<sup>19</sup>). Man looking upon the face of Jesus Christ sees there the glory of God. Christ's character expresses the character of God; His actions are the actions of God. This indeed might only be to say that Christ perfectly fulfils the Mission that had been laid upon Him by God. But we cannot regard such an explanation as a completely adequate

<sup>1</sup> See Lightfoot, *Colossians*, p. 142.

interpretation of the metaphor. It is bound up with His Nature and Personality; so that in the manifestation of Himself there is a manifestation of God. This is the idea that St. John is expressing when he ascribes to Jesus the words: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (Jn 14<sup>9</sup>).

St. Paul thinks of Jesus as existing in a heavenly life of glory before His entry into the world. Thus His Birth is described as a sending forth, which implies pre-existence: "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman" (Gal 4<sup>4</sup>). The peculiar turn of the phrase raises the question whether St. Paul has in his mind here the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Jesus. It is, as we shall see, very doubtful whether the facts of the Infancy of Jesus were by this time generally current in the Church. But they may have come to the ears of St. Paul. And therefore such an explanation of the Galatian phrase is possible. And moreover, we may ask what point there would be in laying stress upon the birth from a woman, unless there were something singular about the woman's agency in the case in point. Such a phrase would be natural if there were no human father concerned in the Birth of Jesus; whereas, if the Birth were in the course of nature, the words would appear to be redundant. The phrase is not conclusive that the Birth from a Virgin was in St. Paul's mind as



he wrote it, but it is at least suggestive of the possibility.

St. Paul's interpretation of the rabbinic tradition of the rock that followed the children of Israel in the wilderness also shows that he thought of Christ as pre-existent: "That rock was Christ" (1 Co 10<sup>4</sup>). Here certainly is mysticism. But however difficult the thought may be, it is clearly implied that Christ had a personal existence in the days of the Wanderings.

And this existence was one of glory in heaven: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich" (2 Co 8<sup>9</sup>). Thus St. Paul teaches the pre-existence of Christ, not as a new doctrine, but as a matter of common knowledge. It is part of the settled tradition of the Church, to which he is able to make his appeal in support of his argument.

We have advanced yet a step farther in the apprehension of the doctrine of the Person of Christ when we find attributed to Him a cosmic significance: "To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him" (1 Co 8<sup>6</sup>). St. Paul is stating the Christian doctrine of the Godhead in opposition to the polytheism of the heathen. The Father is



the Fountain of all being and its final Cause. Jesus Christ is the Lord, the Bearer of a supreme sovereignty. He is the power by which all being is supported and through which it fulfils its purpose. Through Him we attain our goal. Thus He is the Divine agency in the world through which the purpose of the Father is carried out. He stands for the providential work of God in creation: His authority is supreme. In one word, He is Divine.

Such a conclusion as this must sooner or later have been arrived at. It was rendered necessary by an acceptance of the claims of Jesus, which had been authenticated by the Resurrection. Such a claim, for instance, as that of the office of Universal Judge could be based on no lower ground. And this doctrine still occupies St. Paul's mind: "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Ro 2<sup>16</sup>). "We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Co 5<sup>10</sup>; cf. 1 Co 1<sup>7</sup>).

Accordingly, the predicate "God" is actually applied to Christ, who "as concerning the flesh" has sprung from Israel, but yet "is over all, God blessed for ever" (Ro 9<sup>5</sup>). Christ is here described as *θεός*. This is the only natural interpretation of the passage. St. Paul has already shown himself familiar with the idea of Jesus being on a level

with the Godhead: he has in view here His universal dominion, His sovereignty "over all." And the explanation of it is flashed out: He is God! This interpretation, which best fits the grammar of the sentence, is also required by the whole tone of thought.

No stress can be laid upon a phrase which occurs in St. Luke's report of St. Paul's address to the elders of Ephesus. According to the received text, St. Paul bids the elders to "feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood" (Ac 20<sup>28</sup>). The reading is uncertain. Some authorities read, "the Church of the Lord." But if, as seems probable, the words "the Church of God" are to stand, the awkwardness of the sentence suggests that there is a primitive error.<sup>1</sup> In any event, "the Church of God" must mean "the Church of the Father." The words, therefore, have no bearing upon our present discussion.

To sum up, we have been led to the conclusion that during the period which closes with St. Paul's final visit to Jerusalem his apprehension of the doctrine of the Person of Christ has been progressively deepening. He has advanced upon lines which from the beginning were rendered inevitable by his acceptance of the explicit claims made by Christ and by his knowledge of the Resurrection. Though in the mind of St. Paul

<sup>1</sup> Westcott and Hort suggest *τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ* for *τοῦ ἰδίου*.

the glory of Christ is still connected with the fulfilment of His Mission, yet behind the doctrine of the Mission lies the more fundamental doctrine of His Person, which the transcendental character of the Mission itself requires. And it is important to notice that St. Paul, as he unfolds his teaching, implies throughout that he is appealing to the common knowledge of the Christian communities, and is but emphasising a tradition which they themselves possess.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

AT this point in our investigation it becomes necessary for us to ask how far the facts related in the introductory matter in the First and Third Gospels were current at the time now under consideration, and what influence they had in moulding the thought and teaching of the leaders of the Church.

During the time of the earthly life of Jesus, He was uniformly thought of, not only by the Jews who opposed Him, but also by the Apostles themselves, as the son of Joseph and Mary. Philip says to Nathanael, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (Jn 1<sup>45</sup>). In the great discourse at Capernaum upon the Bread of Life, the Jews murmur that one whose parentage, as they supposed, was known should make such exalted claims. "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how doth He now say, I am come down out of heaven?"

(Jn 6<sup>42</sup>). A similar question seems to have been asked by the people in the synagogue at Nazareth. It is true that in St. Mark (Mk 6<sup>3</sup>) the best attested reading runs, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" But a variation, "the son of the carpenter," is also supported. When we turn to the parallel passage in St. Matthew, we read, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Mt 13<sup>55</sup>), and St. Luke records the question in the form, "Is not this Joseph's son?" (Lk 4<sup>23</sup>). We cannot doubt then the original underlying tradition contained an appeal to Joseph's parentage. Further, St. Luke in three instances uses the plural in speaking of the parents of Jesus: "The parents brought in the child Jesus" (Lk 2<sup>27</sup>); "His parents went every year to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover" (Lk 2<sup>41</sup>); "The boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem: and His parents knew it not" (Lk 2<sup>43</sup>). And explicitly He gives to Joseph the title of "father": "His father and His mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning Him" (Lk 2<sup>33</sup>). In addition to this, he ascribes similar language to Mary, who is made to say, "Thy father and I sought Thee sorrowing" (Lk 2<sup>48</sup>). There can therefore be no doubt that such language as this was uniformly used during the earthly life of Jesus in speaking of His parentage. The paternity of Joseph was taken for granted. And no question was raised as to the fact being other than this.

And yet the First and Third Gospels, which retain these expressions that imply the paternity of Joseph, also insist strongly and clearly upon the supernatural Birth of Jesus without the agency of a human father. And in both Gospels this is not only an integral part of the narrative of the Birth and Infancy, but is of fundamental importance. The entire narrative depends upon it. Thus St. Matthew introduces his account with words which show that his purpose is to relate not merely the fact of the Birth, but its transcendent circumstances: "The Birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Mt 1<sup>18</sup>). And an angel announces to Joseph the divine origin of the Conception: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Mt 1<sup>20</sup>). St. Matthew accordingly interprets in this sense the prophecy of Isaiah, and finds a fulfilment of it in the Virgin Birth of Jesus: "All this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

Behold, the Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son,  
And they shall call His name Immanuel" (Mt 1<sup>22t</sup>).

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St. Matthew then points out the meaning of the name thus given: "God with us." It is perhaps not possible to say what he understood as conveyed by this interpretation of the name. He may have meant merely that God was in a special degree present in Jesus, who had thus come charged with a Divine Mission. But it is at least possible that he understood it as implying an essential Divinity of nature.

Turn now to the Third Gospel. Here again we find the same fundamental assertion of the miraculous Birth from a Virgin. In this case the annunciation is made to the Virgin herself: "The angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God" (Lk 1<sup>30ff.</sup>). With this tallies the description of Mary when she goes up to Bethlehem for the



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enrolment. Joseph went up "to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child" (Lk 2<sup>5</sup>).

We have now to consider what degree of advancing knowledge in the primitive communities is implied by these phenomena in the Gospels. During the earthly life of Jesus, as we have seen, no question was raised as to His parentage. The paternity of Joseph was taken for granted. It would appear further that the same was the case during the first period of the life of the Church. Certainly the circumstances of the Birth and Infancy of Jesus formed no part of the cycle of primitive preaching. The history, which formed the subject of Apostolic witness, began not with the Birth of Jesus, but with the baptism of John (Ac 1<sup>21f.</sup>).

This, indeed, is in accordance with what we should expect. The mother of Jesus would ponder in secret over the transcendent miracle that had been worked by the overshadowing of God. But naturally she would shrink from laying bare this innermost secret of her heart. For a long time Joseph and Mary would necessarily hold the great secret alone. A truth so intimate and so holy could not be spoken to be met with mockery or incredulity. Not till a fuller knowledge of Jesus had been made possible by the Resurrection could such a statement have been reverently and

sympathetically received. And therefore, not till then could the secret be divulged. So long as there was any doubt as to how such a communication would be received, it would be impossible for the mother to speak of it.

But there were in the company of Mary a band of women with hearts filled with love and sympathy. And as the Church grew, in the power of the Risen Lord and in the presence of the Holy Spirit, there would at last come a moment when the mother would be able to tell the great fact, which harmonised so well with what was then being realised as to the majesty and the claims of Jesus. The truth would be first whispered to one in that little circle of women. And then perhaps another would be told. And so the knowledge would be given to a little band in immediate association with the mother. Then we may suppose that to one or another of the Apostles the message might be carried. But it is very doubtful whether in the lifetime of the mother there could be any public or general knowledge of the miraculous Birth of Jesus.

There was therefore a period in the primitive life of the Church, perhaps a considerable period, in which, when any thought was given to the Birth of Jesus, the paternity of Joseph was taken for granted. To this period it is probable that the genealogies of the First and Third Gospels belong:

for in each case the genealogy is that of Joseph. That given by St. Matthew is highly artificial, and is designed to represent Jesus as the Son of David, the representative of David's line, and so the true King of Israel. The underlying idea is Judaic and Messianic. The only natural explanation of it is that the compiler regarded Joseph as the father of Jesus. And the same must be said of the compiler of the genealogy which St. Luke adopted and perhaps modified. The two genealogies are quite independent; but the fact that both belong to Joseph seems to prove that they must both be pushed back to the period before the knowledge of the Virgin Birth had attained publicity. The phrase *ὡς ἐνομίζετο* of Lk 3<sup>23</sup>, which comes in so awkwardly, is on this supposition an insertion made by St. Luke. We may suppose that the only genealogy he had been able to discover was a genealogy of Joseph, and he thus adapts it to his purpose, bringing it into harmony with the deeper knowledge which was now in his possession.

Probably, also, the discordant expressions which we have already noticed are to be accounted for by the hypothesis that St. Luke's narratives of the Birth and Infancy were drawn from several distinct written sources. The expressions implying the parentage of Joseph occur in the narratives of the Presentation in the Temple and of the visit

of the child Jesus to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover (Lk 2<sup>27-33</sup> 4<sup>1. 3. 8</sup>). These narratives were probably derived from a written source belonging to the early period in which no question was raised as to the Birth of Jesus. St. Luke incorporated them without removing the language which the fuller knowledge showed to be misleading, or at least to incur a danger of misinterpretation.

Now the actual writing of the Third Gospel is probably to be dated shortly after the year 70 A.D.; but the sources used, whether documentary or oral, carry us back well behind that date. The preface to the Gospel shows how careful St. Luke was to examine his sources. He has traced the course of all things accurately from the first; he has been in personal contact with eye-witnesses, from whom he has derived information; and as a result of his investigations he composed his Gospel (Lk 1<sup>1ff.</sup>). We may be sure, therefore, that he satisfied himself as to the trustworthiness of the sources upon which he drew.

Now the narratives of the Birth and Infancy of Jesus have a distinct Palestinian colouring, and are certainly products of early Judaic Christianity; though, as we have seen, there appear to have been several sources for these narratives, belonging to different, though early, dates. It is reasonable to suppose that St. Luke collected much of his material, including this prefatory matter, in

Palestine, and we may infer that it came into his hands at some period during St. Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea. For the narrative of the Acts seems to indicate clearly, by the continuity of the "we" sections, that St. Luke spent this time in Palestine or Syria. During this period, from about 56 A.D. to 58 A.D., he would have opportunities of intercourse with various Christian communities. Possibly he may have had opportunities of meeting the women who had been intimately acquainted with the mother of Jesus. Possibly he found the Infancy narratives current in small private circles, where there was a tie of special closeness with the women friends of Mary. Probably the narratives connected with the Infancy, as distinct from those relating to the Birth of Jesus, were more widely current, as there would be nothing to hinder their free circulation; and their diction points to an earlier date of composition. For they seem to have been composed in circles where the paternity of Joseph was still taken for granted. The beautiful canticles in which the thanksgivings of Mary, Simeon, and Zacharias have been rendered into Hebrew poetry, must belong to a very early date in the primitive Palestinian Church. And they presuppose a tradition, already well-established, at the time when some archaic Christian poet composed them. Thus, although St. Luke may not have collected the documents which gave him his

introductory matter till shortly before 60 A.D., the form which these documents took proves that they already had a long history behind them. The information they contained formed no part of the earliest Apostolic preaching, but it had been current for long, at least in certain private circles. There is, however, no positive evidence to show that St. Paul had any information of the miraculous Birth of Jesus during the period covered by his third Missionary Journey. As we have already seen, the expression in Gal 4<sup>4</sup> may possibly point to such knowledge. But, in the absence of evidence, this must remain doubtful.

Our investigation of the currency of the sources upon which St. Luke drew for his introductory matter will, however, make it probable that a knowledge of the miraculous Birth of Jesus and its attendant circumstances came to St. Paul during his long imprisonment at Caesarea. During this period he would have had opportunities of conversing with St. Luke, and hearing from him the results of the careful investigations upon which we may fairly presume that he was then engaged.

We have so far said little about the introductory matter in St. Matthew's Gospel. In the First Gospel we are on no such sure historical ground as we are able to occupy in the Third. The actual composition of the present Gospel probably took place indeed somewhat earlier than did that of St. Luke ;



for it shows an outlook which would be natural shortly before the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., whereas St. Luke's Gospel is probably to be placed somewhat after that epoch-making event. But whereas in the case of St. Luke we found so much to throw light upon the character and history of the sources which he drew upon, in the case of St. Matthew we are left very much in the dark. All we can say is that St. Matthew embodies traditions which had at least some currency in the early Palestinian Church. The traditions which he uses are quite distinct from those employed by St. Luke. But the two Evangelists agree emphatically in the fundamental fact of the miraculous Birth. It has been remarked that while St. Luke's sources tell the story from the side of Mary, the First Gospel, on the other hand, gives the narrative from the point of view of Joseph. This divergence is quite in accordance with what we might have expected; for when a narrative is handed on in private confidence, and under such restrictions as were necessarily imposed by the nature of the case, a difference in the point of view would be accentuated. When a story is told in public, the various narrators can compare notes, and are able to check one another; and the story is then more likely to take a consistent shape, as in the account of the public Ministry of Jesus. But a story whispered here in one private circle and there in another would



naturally be told in different places from different points of view, and would be treasured up in various forms. It is therefore not surprising to find that St. Matthew, in tapping a different stream of tradition from St. Luke, records the story in quite a different shape. The significance of the fact that, in spite of this, they are in fundamental agreement, is all the greater.

The conclusion to which we seem to be led by our investigation is that by the year 60 A.D. there was as yet no general knowledge of the transcendent fact of the Virgin Birth. But the tradition had been handed down in private circles. It was accessible to investigators who like St. Luke could win the confidence of those who treasured the knowledge of it, but who as yet could not bring themselves to speak of it openly, though it was already set down in written form. During the following decade, perhaps after the death of the Virgin, the knowledge must have spread more widely. For the written documents would pass into at least some limited circulation. And in the eighth decade our existing Gospels gave the great revelation to the Church at large.

## CHAPTER V

### THE DECADE PRECEDING THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

WE have now arrived at a date at which it is reasonable to suppose that a knowledge of the narratives of the Annunciation and of the Birth and Infancy of Jesus was obtaining a general currency in the Church. The facts thus revealed would be recognised upon reflection as being deeply congruent with what was already known as to the Life and Work of Jesus. They would throw light upon His transcendent claims. It would be felt how completely they harmonised with the stupendous victory of the Resurrection and the supreme exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God.

But, beyond this, we may suppose that this wondrous revelation, which had now become the common property of the Church at large, would seem to give the key to much that had appeared to present an insoluble problem. For the problem that awaited solution was this: How was it possible that so transcendent a Mission could have been laid

upon Jesus? How could such infinite functions belong to Him as those which He had claimed? In searching for the answer to these tremendous questions, the Church was being gradually led to look behind the giving of the Mission and beyond the fact of the Exaltation of Jesus, and to ask, Who is this who bears this stupendous Mission? Who is this that has been exalted by the Resurrection to the very level of the Godhead itself? Behind the Mission is the Person of Him upon whom the Mission is charged. Who is He?

The Church was now able to ponder over the words of the Angel of the Annunciation: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God" (Lk 1<sup>35</sup>). The message told of One who was indeed to enter into human nature, but whose conception, effected without the interposition of human father, spoke of a Being derived from God Himself. Thus a hint was given which led to the recognition of the great central truth of the Person of Jesus, the truth which drew together and unified all the scattered claims which Jesus had made and all the varied fragments of Self-revelation which He had given.

We shall therefore expect to find in the writings of this succeeding period a clearer recognition of

the transcendent Personality of Christ. And we shall not be disappointed. Two writers stand out conspicuously at this time as having entered with deep spiritual insight into the meaning of the revelation of God in Christ. They are St. Paul and the nameless writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The letters of St. Paul with which we are now concerned are those which belong to the first Roman captivity.

Before we examine the distinctive Christology of the writings of this period, we shall do well to notice how the teaching with which the earlier documents have made us familiar reappears with deeper emphasis and fuller expression. As an example of this, we may note the language used by St. Paul of the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God as the outcome of the fulfilment of His Mission. It was on account of His humiliation even unto death that "God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name that is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Ph 2<sup>9ff.</sup>). This does but add further emphasis to the teaching that we have traced from the very first days of the Gospel. It lays stress upon the complete fulfilment of the Mission with which Jesus had been charged by the

Father. Then, having completed His work on earth, Jesus was exalted to a position of absolute supremacy on a level no lower than that of the Godhead itself. As Lord, He claims the fullest allegiance and homage of mankind. This exaltation is for the glory of the Father, inasmuch as it is the outcome of the perfect fulfilment of the Mission which the Father had given to Him. There is nothing in this with which we have not already been made familiar.

The same emphasis upon the exaltation of Jesus marks the Epistle to the Ephesians. God "raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph 1<sup>29ff.</sup>). It is in this Epistle that the conception of the Church universal first clearly emerges; and thus occasion is given for a further definition of what the supremacy of the exalted Jesus involves. He is the head of the Church: for the Church is His Body, the organ of His Self-manifestation in the world. But the Church as the organ of the Self-manifestation of Jesus is only a particular illustration of a yet more fundamental truth. All

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things are filled with Christ: all things are expressions of His energising power. According to their capacity, the several parts of created being are expressions, each in their degree, of the personal activity of Christ. Such expressions are partial and fragmentary. But in the Church, the whole being of Christ finds embodiment and expression: it is His *πλήρωμα*, the adequate expression of His full Personality in His Self-manifestation to mankind.

Here, then, we have a clear statement of the cosmic functions of Jesus. He stands in a personal relation to the whole of created being. We had already found a hint of this doctrine in the earlier group of writings. It now occupies a more prominent place in St. Paul's thought. It is stated again in connection with the Ascension: "He ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph 4<sup>10</sup>).

The work of Christ is in fulfilment of the eternal purpose of God. Looking back into the eternity before creation, St. Paul sees there the pre-existent Christ, in whom, according to God's purpose, was contained all the promise of the future for the human race. God "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1<sup>4</sup>). And again, looking forward to the eternity that is to come, St. Paul finds in Christ the goal of all created being. In Him all scattered aims are

unified, all partial ideals are completed, and the riddle of life is solved. It is the purpose of God "to sum up all things in Christ" (Eph 1<sup>10</sup>). All this, of course, is deeply mystical; but the broad fact emerges that the claims which Jesus had made, and which His Resurrection had at once authenticated and illuminated, were now seen more clearly than before to involve a transcendent view of His Person and Nature. With this introduction we may pass now to a detailed examination of the great Christological passages of these epistles.

The earliest letter of the group with which we are now concerned is the Epistle to the Philippians. Here the Divine Nature of Jesus is taken for granted, and is made the premiss of an argument: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Ph 2<sup>5ff.</sup>). First let us note that here the pre-existence of Christ is taken for granted (*ὑπάρχων*); next, it is stated, as something already received and known, that the pre-existent Christ was "in the form of God." Now *μορφή* connotes that which is essential to a thing and makes it



what it is. Hence *μορφὴ θεοῦ* is that which characterises God, that which is distinctive of Godhead. It had been long recognised that the exalted Christ is on a level with the Godhead. By this time the necessary deduction from this doctrine was clearly seen. None could be on a level with the Godhead unless there belonged to Him by right the essential attributes and qualities of Godhead itself. Such a one must necessarily be *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ*: there must be inherent in Him all that is proper to true Divinity. Hence St. Paul is able to state this as a premiss of his argument: there belonged to the pre-existent Christ a nature properly Divine; He was within the Being of the Godhead, and so possessed in His own right and by nature an essential equality with God. This equality was not something that needed to be eagerly snatched at or vehemently asserted. It was His acknowledged possession. And yet "He emptied Himself," He surrendered what was His by right in order to take "the form of a slave." The two phrases stand side by side in completest contrast — *μορφὴ θεοῦ* and *μορφὴ δούλου*. In each case *μορφή* expresses essential nature, the totality of the qualities which make up the idea in question. The Philippians are reminded that He who, as they knew, possessed all that belongs to Godhead, so emptied Himself as to take upon Himself all that belongs to slavery.

His Godhead was an original possession (*ὑπάρχων*); the slavery was assumed (*λαβών*). St. Paul's primary object here was not to convey doctrinal teaching, but to give a supreme illustration of humility and self-effacement. For this purpose he quotes the Self-emptying of Christ. But incidentally the passage shows very clearly what St. Paul's thought now was as to the Being of Christ. Not only do the attributes of God belong to Him, but the essential nature of the Godhead is His eternal possession.

We now turn to the Christological passages in the Epistle to the Colossians. St. Paul refers to the Divine Sonship in an expression which shows that he has in his mind an essential relation and not merely an Adoptionist position. The Father, he tells us, "translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col 1<sup>13</sup>). It is only part of the truth to say that the relationship so described is a unique relationship. Love is the essential characteristic of the Father's being. The Son of His love is one who partakes of that very essence; the Sonship is His by nature and not merely by adoption. In the formalised language of a later day, He is of one substance with the Father.

This appears further in the words that follow. The vocabulary of the passage recalls that of the Alexandrian philosophy of the Logos. Of this philosophy Philo was the principal exponent; and

the same special terms are used here as are characteristic of Philo and of his school. This is far from implying that the ideas conveyed by St. Paul are those of Philo, or that the content of the words is the same in the two writers. The knowledge and insight of St. Paul find for these terms a far deeper significance than they could ever have had in the Alexandrian school. It is especially noteworthy that while St. Paul uses the leading terms which are technical of various ideas in the Alexandrian doctrines, not always consistent, of the Logos, yet the central term itself is entirely absent from his writings. We may suppose that he felt that it could not be used without an introduction of the misleading notions that had gathered around it.

Christ is "the image of the invisible God" (Col 1<sup>15</sup>). The term *εἰκὼν θεοῦ* is one with which we have already met in the earlier group of Epistles (2 Co 4<sup>4</sup>). It is frequently used by Philo in connection with the Logos. Its use by St. Paul means that Christ perfectly represents God, and that in Christ God is manifested. The force of the epithet *ἀόρατος*, therefore, is clear. God Himself is invisible, withdrawn from the perception of sight, whether physical or spiritual. But yet He is seen in Christ, by whom He is made known (cf. Jn 1<sup>18</sup>).

While the phrase we have just been considering

has in view the Person of Christ in relation to God, the next clause defines His position in regard to the created universe. He is "the Firstborn of all creation" (Col 1<sup>15</sup>). Now the term *πρωτότοκος*, like *εἰκὼν θεοῦ*, belongs to the vocabulary of Alexandrian philosophy. But it also possesses Old Testament associations. Thus Jehovah says of the Davidic king—

"I will make him My firstborn,  
The highest of the kings of the earth" (Ps 89<sup>27</sup>).

This psalm received a Messianic interpretation, and consequently the term *πρωτότοκος* was connected with the Jewish Messianic hope. It is probable that the full meaning which St. Paul has in his mind as he uses this word contains elements drawn from both of these associations.

But the question arises, what St. Paul means to imply by the idea of primogeniture in relation to created being. Christ, he says, is *πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως*. Now the words, even when taken by themselves, do not necessarily require that Christ is regarded as a created being. The use of the genitive does not involve the interpretation that He is thought of as belonging to the *κτίσις*, in relation to which He stands as Firstborn. We may interpret the phrase as meaning that He is the Firstborn absolutely, not comparatively; and that as the Firstborn He stands in the relation of sovereign

Lord to all creation. The usage of the term *πρωτότοκος* shows that the prominent idea in the word is that of the rights and privileges which belong to the heir (cf. He 1<sup>2</sup>, *ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων*).

Such an interpretation of the phrase is therefore possible in this case. And the context shows that this interpretation is not only possible but necessary. No other meaning is admissible. For the context, which explains the phrase, represents Christ as standing above all creation, distinct from it as well as prior to it: "In Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Col 1<sup>16f.</sup>). The eternal Person who became Man is the source of all created being. Clearly we here have to do with no philosophical abstraction like the Alexandrian Logos, but with a Person active and energising, and that Person Divine.

All things were created "in Him": He is the source of the life and energy of all created being. All things were created "through Him": He is the instrument through whom the creative power of the Father passes into action. All things were created "unto Him": He is the goal towards which all creation moves (cf. Eph 1<sup>10</sup>).

The pre-existence of Christ is absolute, unconditioned, and timeless. Simply, "He is," *αὐτὸς ἔστιν πρὸ πάντων* (Col 1<sup>17</sup>). Before all creation He exists in eternal being (cf. Jn 8<sup>58</sup>). And when creation came into being "in Him," "through Him," and "unto Him," then it found in Him its centralising and unifying principles. It is He who gives a meaning to the created universe, and makes it intelligible, purposeful, and coherent. "In Him all things consist" (Col 1<sup>17</sup>, *τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν*).

And further, Christ stands in the same relation to the new spiritual creation, the Church. Just as He is Head of the universe in virtue of His eternal Being, so He is Head of the Church in virtue of His exalted humanity. For He is "the Firstborn from the dead" (Col 1<sup>18</sup>). And thus, in the entire realm of created and new-created existence, "He has the pre-eminence" (Col 1<sup>18</sup>).

The ground of this supreme sovereignty is found in the will of God: "It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell" (Col 1<sup>19</sup>). And this phrase is further explained below: "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col 2<sup>9</sup>).

Here, then, we have a recurrence of the term which we have already seen to be reminiscent of the Philonic philosophy. "The fulness of the Godhead" (*τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος*) stands for the



totality of the Divine powers and attributes. All that belongs to the Godhead is found in Christ. It resides in Him as in a permanent dwelling-place (*κατοικῆσαι*, not *παροικεῖν*). The essential characteristics of Deity in all their completeness are in Christ.<sup>1</sup>

And, further, the Divine essence belonging to the Eternal Person of Christ dwelt within a bodily form (*σωματικῶς*) in virtue of the Incarnation. In Christ's human Body it found an adequate instrument of manifestation.

Thus St. Paul summarises the conception, which he has gradually realised, of the Eternal Divine Person and the earthly manifestation of Christ. And accordingly he is led to say, that "in Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden" (Col 2<sup>3</sup>), and that "He is the head of all principality and power" (Col 2<sup>10</sup>).

We now pass over an interval of a few years, and we come to another important witness. The Epistle to the Hebrews must be dated on the eve of the outbreak of the Jewish war, and is therefore to be placed shortly before the year 67 A.D. Its anonymous writer is clearly familiar with St. Paul, but he preserves an independent mind and has a different point of view. He is therefore an inde-

<sup>1</sup> The word used is *θεότης*, which describes the essence of Deity, as opposed to *θειότης*, which would not imply more than a participation in the qualities of Divinity.



pendent witness to the growth of apprehension by the Church of the Person and Work of Jesus.

At the opening of his treatise he plunges at once into the heart of his theme. His object is to depict the overwhelming value and majesty of the Christian Faith as proceeding from the transcendent Personality of the Eternal Son of God. The unique Sonship of Him through whom the Christian revelation is given is contrasted with the lower office of those through whom, in many parts and in many ways, the earlier dispensation had been received (He 1<sup>14</sup>). We then have a detailed statement of what is implied by this Divine Sonship. The Son is heir of the universe: all created things came into being by His agency and constitute His inheritance (He 1<sup>2</sup>). It is to be noticed that this inheritance is in virtue of God's decree (*ἐθηκεν*). But this is not a decree in time; it is an eternal decree. It lies in the eternal purpose of God. The context makes it abundantly clear that there is no suggestion of Adoptionism. The decree has no reference to the Mission of the Son, but belongs to the Son's essential Being. For it goes back into timeless eternity, before the making of the worlds (He 1<sup>2</sup>).

What, then, is the nature of the Son in the view of the writer to the Hebrews? He is the effulgence of the glory of God (*ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης*). As the rays of light proceed from their

source and make that source visible, so the Son is the manifestation of the Divine attributes. In Him the Father is seen. But also He is "the very image of His substance" (*χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ*): He possesses the Divine essence. And hence He upholds all things by the word of His power (He 1<sup>3</sup>, *φέρων τὰ πάντα*; cf. Col 1<sup>17</sup>), bearing them forward to their goal. He is the underlying force in the universe, which secures that the eternal purpose of God in creation shall not fail of fulfilment. The universe is instinct with His presence, and is directed by His power.

Such is the writer's view of the essential Being of the Son (*ὢν*, not *γενόμενος*, v.<sup>3</sup>). And then follows the description of the fulfilment of the Mission laid by the Father upon this Eternal Being. He made purification of sins, and then sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (v.<sup>3</sup>). Thus, by the triumphant issue of His Mission, He wins a new honour, "having become (*γενόμενος*) by so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent Name than they" (v.<sup>4</sup>). This Name is that of Son, as is shown by the quotation that follows: "For unto which of the angels said He at any time,

Thou art My Son,  
This day have I begotten Thee?" (v.<sup>5</sup>).

The meaning is that He who essentially is the Son

was for a time made lower than the angels by the taking of human flesh (He 2<sup>a</sup>), and then as a result of the Resurrection and Ascension was raised again to that position of majesty which was His by right. Thus the writer brings out clearly the continuity of person. The historic Christ is one and the same with Him who from all eternity was in the glory of the Godhead and sovereign Lord of the universe; one and the same, too, with Him who is now exalted at the right hand of God. He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever" (He 13<sup>s</sup>).

This, then, is the transcendent doctrine which our writer holds upon the subject of the Person of Christ. The agreement with St. Paul is remarkable. Though the metaphors and the vocabulary are different, the teaching conveyed coincides completely. There is the same view of the Eternal Person. The true Divine Nature, the Incarnation, the Exaltation and cosmic functions of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, are all clearly enunciated.

At this point, indeed, our author, writing as he does to Hebrew Christians, adds a further trait in the revelation of the Son. He regards this revelation as already set forth in all its fulness in the Old Testament Scriptures. He is the "Firstborn" to whom worship is due: "When He again bringeth in the Firstborn into the world He saith, And let

all the angels of God worship Him" (He 1<sup>6</sup>). The title of "Firstborn" is interpreted as expressing the relation of the Son to all created being. He stands above and apart from creation: He is the Heir of all.

We now come to a remarkable interpretation of the 45th Psalm: "Of the Son He saith:

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;  
 And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.  
 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity;  
 Therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee  
 With the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (He 1<sup>8f</sup>).

Now, whatever may be the true interpretation of the original Hebrew of this psalm and of the Septuagint Version, it seems clear that the writer of the Epistle here gives the title "God" (ὁ θεός) to Christ. We must not, however, lay stress upon this, for it is grammatically possible to translate the verse, as Bishop Westcott prefers to do,

"God is Thy throne for ever and ever."

But in any case the quotation is designed to show the unique dignity of Christ, and, apart from all question of its meaning, the opening words of the chapter show quite clearly that the writer regards the Nature of this transcendent Person as being essentially Divine.

The series of quotations in this chapter, as

interpreted by the writer of the Epistle, are evidently designed to cover practically the whole of the ground taken in the opening verses. Accordingly, we next have a quotation which is adduced to justify the assertion of the creative power of the Son. Words spoken originally of Jehovah are transferred to the Son :

“Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth,  
 And the heavens are the works of Thy hands :  
 They shall perish ; but Thou continuest :  
 And they all shall wax old as doth a garment ;  
 And as a mantle shalt Thou roll them up,  
 As a garment, and they shall be changed :  
 But Thou art the same,  
 And Thy years shall not fail ” (He 1<sup>10π</sup>).

We need not perhaps discuss the validity of the argument which is based upon this interpretation of the Old Testament. For our investigation has shown that the position which is here defended was not arrived at by the Christian Church by such arguments as are here used to support it. The belief in the Godhead of the Son and in His cosmic functions was the outcome of a meditation upon His earthly life, and upon the claims which He then made, and which He established by His Resurrection. The reference to the Scriptures of the Old Testament is an afterthought. Their value for us lies in the witness they bear to the exalted belief held by the writer upon the subject of the

Eternal Person of the Son of God, who was manifested in the world.

The distinctive point of view from which the writer of this Epistle regards the work of the Son of God is that of its priestly character. Jesus is invested with a High Priesthood; and this High Priesthood derives its special character from the fact that He who bears it is an Eternal Person. We have "a great High Priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God" (He 4<sup>14</sup>). He has "become a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (He 6<sup>20</sup>). Melchizedek, His prototype, is "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God" (He 7<sup>3</sup>). Thus a mystic interpretation is given of the silence of Scripture upon the subject of the parentage of Melchizedek. It is interpreted as hinting at an eternity of being which belongs to Him whom Melchizedek prefigured, the Son of God. In contrast to the priests after the order of Aaron, Jesus, "because He abideth for ever, hath His priesthood unchangeable" (He 7<sup>24</sup>), He is "a Son, perfected for evermore" (He 7<sup>28</sup>).

For a moment we may return to St. Paul. On the assumption of the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles, they belong to the closing years of his life.



They show that to the end he held the same exalted view of the Person and the Work of Jesus. His doctrine is based on the mystery of the Incarnation: "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: He who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory" (1 Ti 3<sup>16</sup>). And what is "the Childbearing" through which women are to be saved? Is it not the Childbearing of Mary, the mother of Jesus? Eve, the first mother, by her sin brought death (1 Ti 2<sup>14</sup>): Mary, the mother of the Son of God, has brought life. This is "the Childbearing" by means of which women shall be saved, "if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety" (1 Ti 2<sup>15</sup>).

To Jesus belongs an eternal pre-existence. The grace of God, by which He has called us to salvation, "was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel" (2 Ti 1<sup>9</sup>). The coming of Jesus was the manifestation of One whose Being was from before times eternal.

And He who was thus manifested, and will one day appear in glory, is Himself God. He is "our great God and Saviour." The faithful are "looking for the blessed hope and appearing



of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit 2<sup>13</sup>).<sup>1</sup>

To this same decade belongs the genuine Epistle of St. Peter. What was St. Peter's view, at this time, of the Person and Nature of Jesus Christ? In the first place, he regards Him as eternally pre-existent. Christ "was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through Him are believers in God, which raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory" (1 P 1<sup>20f</sup>). Thus the pre-existence of Christ leads on to His manifestation in time and then to His Exaltation. He "is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (1 P 3<sup>22</sup>). And His is "the glory and the dominion for ever and ever" (1 P 4<sup>11</sup>). To Him, therefore, our allegiance is due. We are to sanctify in our hearts "Christ as Lord" (1 P 3<sup>15</sup>).

St. Peter, therefore, regards Jesus Christ as existing in heaven before all creation, and exalted above all created being. It is surely reasonable to suppose that He, like St. Paul and the anonymous writer to the Hebrews, recognised what this tremendous doctrine involved. Though his short letter

<sup>1</sup> προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μαχαρίαν ἐλπίδα καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. The construction of the phrase seems to require the interpretation given above.

contains no formal expression of the doctrine of the Divine Nature of Christ, we need not doubt that he too had come to realise its truth. In no other way could such language as he uses be justified.

But, on the other hand, it may well have been that his mind had not the logical acuteness shown by the two great writers whom we have just been considering. There were different levels of spiritual insight among the members of the Apostolic circle. Some saw farther than others into the deep things of God. Some were quicker than others to perceive what the Self-revelation of Jesus implied. But all would have been eager to say from the heart, though with varying fulness of meaning—

“Thou art the King of glory, O Christ.

Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.”

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CLOSING DECADE OF THE CENTURY

WE now pass over a considerable interval of time, and come to the closing decade of the first century. By this time the latest of the Synoptic Gospels had probably been written twenty years, and all three must have already obtained a wide currency throughout the Christian Church. The life of the Church was already taking a more settled and permanent form, especially in the older centres of Christianity. A new element, derived from the teaching of history, was now taking its place in reflecting minds. For the sixty years of Christianity provided a striking lesson. They proved in a wonderful manner the continued presence of the living Christ. Christ exalted in heaven was still with His Church on earth. He was still its inspiring power and its sovereign Lord. The experience, therefore, of history was an aid to the further interpretation of the Self-revelation of Jesus.

We are concerned throughout the present

chapter with an important and ancient centre of Christianity, the churches of pro-consular Asia. One figure dominates the scene, that of the Apostle St. John. A strong and practically unvarying tradition ascribes to St. John a long residence at Ephesus during the closing years of his life, and we may feel sure that his unique influence and personality moulded the thought of the churches of Asia at this time. We adopt here the position that the Fourth Gospel is essentially his Gospel. How far the actual writing is his, and how far it owes its literary shape to the work of a disciple, it is difficult to determine. But we believe that the heart of the Gospel and the picture it draws come to us from St. John himself.

The other great document which belongs to this period is the Apocalypse. This too is the work of one whose name was John. We accept the date of the Apocalypse which the earliest tradition assigns to it, and place it in the closing years of the reign of Domitian, in the first half of the last decade of the century.<sup>1</sup> In point of date, therefore, it is not widely separated from the Fourth Gospel; and we find it impossible to believe that both Gospel and Apocalypse can have proceeded from the same author. If St. John the Apostle is the author of the Fourth Gospel, he surely cannot

<sup>1</sup> Swete, *The Apocalypse*.

have written the Apocalypse. Even if we adopt the position that the actual shape of the Fourth Gospel is due to an unknown disciple, but that St. John himself stands close behind this disciple, we still feel that there is a literary gulf between the two writings which makes us say that one who was closely connected with the production of the Fourth Gospel could not have composed the Apocalypse. We believe, therefore, that another John must have been the author of the Apocalypse.

But none the less there is an occurrence of certain great ideas and words and phrases in the Apocalypse which we feel to be an echo of the teaching of St. John the Apostle. The explanation is probably to be found in the fact that for some time during the last quarter of the century the dominant influence in the churches of Asia was that of St. John the Apostle. His namesake, the writer of the Apocalypse, reflects his teaching, as it is natural a disciple should do. But his mind is an independent one; his point of view is that of a Christian prophet.

The importance for our purpose of the Ephesian witness is due to the fact that it belongs to a different branch of Apostolic tradition from those which we have just been considering. For the theology of St. Paul and of the writer to the Hebrews are the outcome of a line of tradition

which stands apart from that leading to the Johannine writings. It is therefore very significant to find that the Johannine school arrives at an interpretation of the Nature and Person of Jesus essentially the same as that to which the other principal writers of the New Testament are led.

We will first examine the Christology of the Apocalypse. The book opens with a description of a vision of the glorified Christ. The majesty of His appearance is so overpowering that the Seer falls at His feet as one dead (Rev 1<sup>17</sup>). He appears in form "like unto a son of man"—that is, in human nature (v.<sup>13</sup>); but His glory is such as to suggest that this does not exhaust the whole truth as to His transcendent Personality: "His head and His hair were white as white wool, white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and His voice as the voice of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" (vv.<sup>14ff.</sup>). He is supreme over the issues of life, for He holds the keys of death and of Hades (v.<sup>18</sup>). He is sovereign Lord of the Church, for the seven stars that He holds in His hand represent seven typical churches.

Next let us consider His position in relation to the Father. He is exalted to the level of the Godhead, for He is enthroned in heaven with the Father: "I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne" (Rev 3<sup>21</sup>). The throne of heaven is therefore "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev 22<sup>1,3</sup>). And the characteristic description of Him is "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne" (Rev 7<sup>17</sup>). In accordance with this, the names of God and of Christ are frequently coupled together on co-equal terms. After the war in heaven, a great voice cries, "Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ" (Rev 12<sup>10</sup>). But usually in such passages Jesus appears as "the Lamb," in which case He is thought of in His mediatorial capacity. Thus the wicked will desire to escape "from Him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev 6<sup>16</sup>). The multitude of the redeemed stand "before the throne and before the Lamb" (Rev 7<sup>9</sup>). They cry, "Salvation unto our God and unto the Lamb" (v.<sup>10</sup>). The redeemed on the Mount Zion are "the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb" (Rev 14<sup>4</sup>). In the heavenly Jerusalem, "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb" are its temple (Rev 21<sup>22</sup>). And again, "the lamp thereof is the Lamb" (v.<sup>23</sup>). Accordingly, the Lamb is associated with God in the ascription



of worship by all creation: "Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever" (Rev 5<sup>13</sup>). And, once again, He shares with God a universal sovereignty: "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev 11<sup>15</sup>).

Next let us examine the powers and attributes that are ascribed to the exalted Christ: He has power to read the innermost thoughts of men: "I am He that searcheth the reins and hearts" (Rev 2<sup>23</sup>). And consequently, the execution of all judgment is committed to Him: "I will give unto each one of you according to your works" (*ib.*). He has power to blot out of the Book of Life the names of the impenitent; but those who overcome He will confess before His Father and before the angels (Rev 3<sup>5</sup>). His is the final decision that determines the destiny of men: there is no appeal from Him. For it is He "that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and none shall shut, and that shutteth, and none openeth" (Rev 3<sup>7</sup>). So those who worship the beast shall be tormented "in the presence of the Lamb" (Rev 14<sup>10</sup>). And only they "which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" shall be admitted to the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 21<sup>37</sup>). Such attributes as these point to no

lower condition than Godhead in Him to whom they belong.

But if there were any doubt as to the position which Jesus occupies in the mind of the Seer, all such doubt would be removed by a consideration of the remarkable series of titles which He receives in this book. Not only is He "the Amen, the faithful and true witness" (Rev 3<sup>14</sup>; cf. 19<sup>11</sup>), "the root and offspring of David," and "the bright and morning star" (Rev 22<sup>16</sup>), but also He is "the Living One" (Rev 1<sup>17</sup>): His essential possession is life. And this life is eternal; for He is "the first and the last" (Rev 1<sup>17</sup>), and "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev 3<sup>14</sup>). And even the great title "the Alpha and the Omega" is at the last great climax of the book claimed by Christ Himself: "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to render to each man according as his work is. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev 22<sup>12f.</sup>). This is the title which is exclusively Divine and is given to the Eternal God (Rev 1<sup>8</sup> 21<sup>6</sup>). Thus the proof is clear that the Seer regards Jesus as partaking of the Godhead in all its fulness. He shares with the Father the eternity that is before all time: through Him all things had their beginning; in Him all things have their goal. His sovereignty is absolute: the powers of evil "shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall over-

come them, for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings " (Rev 17<sup>14</sup>).

One title remains for consideration. The Seer portrays the vision of the mighty Warrior upon the white horse. His eyes are as a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems, expressive of universal sovereignty. Out of His mouth proceeds a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations. And His name is called "the Word of God" (Rev 19<sup>11ff.</sup>).

Here for the first time in the Apostolic interpretation of the Self-revelation of Jesus we find the idea of a personal Logos. The idea was conspicuously absent from the Epistle to the Colossians, where we might have expected to find it. For though the Christological passages in that epistle make free use of a series of terms which Alexandrian philosophy associated with the doctrine of the Logos, yet the central term itself of that philosophy never appeared. It almost seemed as though it was deliberately excluded, owing to a fear that, if it were employed, it might appear to carry with it a false conception.

In this passage of the Apocalypse, however, though we have not yet reached the absolute use of the title *ὁ λόγος*, we find the term used relatively to God. The glorified Jesus is *ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ*.

We must examine shortly the history of the

phrase. In the Old Testament it is used to express a message from God spoken through a prophet (1 S 9<sup>27</sup>, 1 K 12<sup>22</sup>, 1 Ch 17<sup>3</sup>, Pr 30<sup>5</sup>, Is 40<sup>8</sup>). In the New Testament it is used sometimes with the same meaning (Mk 7<sup>13</sup>, Jn 10<sup>35</sup>), and sometimes also to express the teaching of the Gospel. This latter use is frequent, but Professor Swete points out that it is confined to St. Luke and St. Paul.<sup>1</sup>

In the Book of Wisdom, which emanates from Alexandria and marks a stage in the Alexandrian philosophy anterior to that of Philo, "the Word of God" is already personified. Its action is described in a passage which has features presenting a strong affinity to the Apocalyptic description of the Warrior on the white horse, who wears the royal diadems and comes forth with His sharp sword dealing death to His enemies.

"Thine all-powerful Word leaped from heaven out of the  
royal throne,  
A stern Warrior, into the midst of the doomed land,  
Bearing as a sharp sword Thy unfeigned commandment;  
And standing it filled all things with death;  
And while it touched the heaven it trode upon the  
earth" (Wis 18<sup>1st</sup>).

In each case the thought is of the execution of judgment. It is difficult to believe that this passage from the Book of Wisdom was not present to the mind of the Seer as he penned his descrip-

<sup>1</sup> Swete, *Apocalypse*, ad loc.

tion of the vision. At all events, the Word of God, the revelation of God to man, is personified in Jesus. In Him God is perfectly revealed.

But a deep mystery is involved in the Personality of the central Figure of the vision. A paradox in the Seer's words shows the presence of mystery. For though, on the one hand, "His Name is called The Word of God," yet, on the other, the Name written is one "which no one knoweth but He Himself" (Rev 19<sup>12</sup>). The "Name," according to Hebrew usage, expresses the revelation of the Person; but here we are faced by a Personality which eludes our every effort to probe the fulness of its meaning. For it is infinite in respect of its essence: and though we may know in part, and though the title given may convey to our apprehension some fragment of the truth, yet the infinite unknown must always lie beyond our ken. Thus the Seer hints at the Divine Nature of Him who, according to our capacity to receive the revelation, manifests God to us. He is the Word of God. And in proportion as He is known, in that proportion God is revealed to man.

The vision closes with a fresh assertion of the claim to supreme Sovereignty: "He hath on His garment and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev 19<sup>16</sup>; cf. 17<sup>14</sup>).

Thus the Apocalypse unhesitatingly ascribes to

Jesus the full prerogatives of Deity. The Seer does not attempt to show how the picture he draws of the exalted Jesus is consistent with the monotheism which he strongly maintains. It is no part of his scheme to deliver a philosophical treatise. He is carried out of himself by the grandeur of his conceptions and by the surpassing wonder of the revelation that is vouchsafed to him. He wrestles with ideas that are too great for words. The very grammar of the Apocalypse is shattered in the attempt to make it express the transcendent thoughts that fill his soul, but which human language, anthropomorphic as it is, cannot convey. So he presents to us the great Figure of the Word of God in the changing phantasmagoria of glorious and terrific vision. To this Divine Person the whole heart and soul of the Seer go out in adoration and wonder and awe.

Who, then, is this whose Personality is so tremendous, transcending thought and knowledge, and who in human life has revealed God to man? St. John shall tell us this in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth



in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not" (Jn 1<sup>st</sup>).

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth" (Jn 1<sup>st</sup>).

Here, then, is the coping-stone set to the building upon which through sixty years the Church had been at work. Its task had been to unravel the meaning of the Self-revelation of Jesus. The first generation of Christians might live upon the enthusiastic recollection of the wonderful life and the gracious Figure of Jesus; but for the permanent life of the Church it was necessary that there should be an intellectual apprehension of the gospel, and in particular that a clear answer should be given to the question, Who is this that claims the entire allegiance of man?

Let us see what is contained in this final answer that is given by St. John. Apart from the new terminology, almost every element in the prologue has already found explicit statement. A new vehicle of expression is found in the adoption of the central term of Alexandrian philosophy, though in connection with a range of ideas very widely distinct from the fluctuating and fanciful notions that are characteristic of Philo.

Already in the Apocalypse we have found the title "the Word of God" given to the exalted



Jesus. Here the title is absolute, "the Word." It expresses the perfect manifestation of the unseen and infinite God. It is His complete revelation. It includes the totality of God's action, the full exercise of His Personality, the expression of His Will. St. John's doctrine is that an infinite Personal Being thus expresses God. This Personal Being is eternal: He has no beginning of days. His eternal Being is with God. And He Himself is God: He partakes of the Divine Nature in all its fulness. He has His Being within the unity of the Godhead. Since He is the manifestation of God's activity, it follows that He is the agent in creation. And He holds in being that which He created; for in Him is life. As the Word, who reveals God, He is the light of men; for He gives to men the true light of the knowledge of God.

It was this same Eternal Word who in time entered into human nature, and so gave to man the supreme and final revelation of God.

This is the doctrine of St. John's prologue; and we recognise at once that it harmonises completely with the doctrine to which St. Paul and the writer to the Hebrews had been independently led. It is, moreover, a philosophical statement of a doctrine which the Apocalypse absolutely requires. Its distinctiveness lies in the new terminology and in its clear-cut statements. Moreover, we recognise

how wonderfully it expresses, so far as human language can, the transcendental truth which alone could make intelligible the claims of Jesus. The Church had come to recognise that the claims which Jesus had made and established required that He should be thought of as Divine. Our task has been to show the progressive apprehension of this great truth. We have witnessed the search of the great writers of the New Testament for language in which to express the knowledge to which at any period they had attained. And finally, we have seen the adoption by St. John of a term taken from a current system of philosophy and his employment of it to express a far more majestic truth than that philosophy could ever have imagined.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE TRUTH OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH

WE have watched the gradual development to near the close of the first century of the doctrine of the Person of our Lord. It is now necessary to look back from the conclusion which has been reached, and ask whether the Catholic doctrine of the Person of our Lord is justified by the premisses from which it is derived. We have noticed how, throughout the whole process of evolution of the doctrine, appeal is always made to the primitive tradition. There is at no time the smallest consciousness of the enunciation of anything new. The one aim of all the writers of the New Testament is the elucidation of the faith once delivered to the Apostles.

Now that we have examined the conclusion to which the Church was led, let us look back to the narrative of the Gospels, and ask whether the claims of Jesus, as illustrated and enforced by His Life and Resurrection, require such an interpretation of His Person.

First let us summarise the claims of Jesus as set forth in the Synoptic Gospels. We have seen that remarkable reticence characterised the whole of the early period of the Ministry. Jesus during this time was preparing the ground in the hearts of His disciples for the reception of His spiritual teaching. Hence He carefully abstained from making any Messianic claim, since in doing so He would have aroused expectations which were quite contradictory to the spirit of His Mission. But throughout this time He laid stress upon the spiritual character of His Mission, and He emphasised the sacredness of this Mission, as having been laid upon Him by God Himself.

In virtue of His Mission He laid claim to a high authority. He claimed the right to set aside the Mosaic legislation, now that its temporary purpose was fulfilled, and to replace it by a permanent code of ethics of His own. When at last He accepted the title of "the Christ," He insisted upon its spiritual significance. His Messianic office was one which proceeded from His Father in heaven, and which only a spiritual faculty could enable men to apprehend.

Jesus selected as the title under which He might best prepare His disciples to receive His Self-revelation that of the "Son of man." We have seen how, under this title, He expressed the ideal and representative character of His human

nature. His is the perfection of manhood. He stands for all that man should be; and He has therefore a right to speak and act with authority.

But in association with this title, though going far beyond what the title in itself would convey, Jesus made a series of transcendent claims connected with the final destiny of the human race. We have already analysed His eschatological discourses. They lead up to His central and tremendous claim to be the Universal Judge of mankind. His office of Judge is one that will be invested with the utmost glory and majesty. Our examination of the authority of these sayings of Jesus makes it quite clear that they belong to the original tradition. We need have no hesitation in maintaining that these claims were actually made by Jesus Himself.

Now what does the office of Universal Judge imply? Let us remember that the verdict of the Judge determines the eternal destiny of mankind. Our most firmly held convictions make us certain that the judgment must be just; for perfect justice must, we are certain, characterise God's rule of the universe. But perfect justice in judgment requires infinite knowledge. The Judge, who passes eternal judgment upon all mankind, must have perfect knowledge of the innermost secrets of all those who stand at the bar to be judged. Must we not say that no mind lower than the

infinite Mind of God could possibly possess the capacity required for such a work as this? The universal Judge of mankind must have His Being within the Godhead. The eschatological discourses of Jesus inevitably lead to the conclusion that He who makes such transcendent assertions is in effect claiming to be God. It is clear that these discourses made a deep impression upon the disciples, and filled a large place in the early thought of the Church. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the Apostles sought to analyse the meaning of the wonderful Personality which had been in their midst, they should have interpreted the Nature of Jesus in the way they did.

Let us now approach the question from another point of view, that of the Divine Sonship. We have seen that certainly from the time of His Baptism Jesus was conscious of standing in a unique relation of Sonship to God. In the later days of the Ministry, after the minds of the Apostles had been sufficiently trained in spiritual things to enable them to accept such teaching, this doctrine of the Divine Sonship occupied an increasingly important place in the teaching of Jesus. It is abundantly clear that the relation of the Son to the Father is interpreted in such a way as to postulate a Nature far above mere humanity. Not only does the name of the Son appear in an ascending sequence—the angels, the

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Son, the Father—which places Him in rank above the angels, but also in the central Synoptic passage the Son is spoken of in such a way as can only be reasonably explained on the ground of a community of nature with the Father..

We have, indeed, seen reason to believe that Jesus did not actually during the Ministry make any explicit claim to be Divine. But the point we wish now to emphasise is that only on the supposition that His Being is eternal and within the Godhead, can any adequate meaning be given to His words. If it were impossible to accept a belief in the Godhead of Jesus, it would be necessary for us to explain away much that He said. But, on the other hand, this great belief, which is indicated by so many lines of thought and was accepted by those who knew Him in His earthly manifestation, draws everything together and makes His entire Work and Teaching fall into a consistent whole.

Those who have accepted the standpoint of Catholic Christianity will attach immense weight and value to the Fourth Gospel. They will feel how wonderfully true it is to the innermost spirit of their faith. Regarding the Gospel as an interpretation of history, they will recognise that the interpretation is true. St. John, looking back over the vista of the years, has seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He has seen it



because it is there. Though to outward eyes the glory of the Eternal Son was veiled in the taking of human flesh, yet to the spiritual insight of St. John the life of Jesus was the manifestation of the Word, the Revelation of the Father.

Such is the value of the Fourth Gospel to those who have already learnt to accept the Catholic faith. But it has also an evidential value for those who are inquiring whether the Catholic interpretation of the Person of Jesus is warranted by the evidence. For in a very real sense the Fourth Gospel is an historical document, and, as such, it will provide us with additional material for arriving at the answer to the question whether the Apostles were in fact justified in coming to their conclusion as to the Deity of Jesus. The precise weight to be attached to the Fourth Gospel from this point of view is difficult to determine, and different minds will allow very varying degrees of weight to it. The question is how far the Gospel is historical in the literal sense of the word. What allowance must we make for the subjective element? How far has interpretation of the words of Jesus gone beyond what the words themselves would justify?

The view we have taken is that the Gospel is substantially the work of the Apostle St. John, who was the companion of Jesus throughout the Ministry, and who was admitted more closely than

the others to the innermost heart of his Master. It will follow from this that the Teaching of Jesus as given in this Gospel must be very largely true to fact. More than this we do not postulate. But in broad outline the claims represented in the Gospel must be those which Jesus actually made. Take, for instance, the recurring claim of Jesus to be the source of life: the gift of eternal life is from Him; a living union with Him and an active participation in His inmost Being is necessary for spiritual life.

This teaching is fundamental in the Fourth Gospel. It is inexplicable except on the supposition that Jesus partakes of the Godhead. It was inevitable that sooner or later such teaching would be recognised as involving the transcendent claim acknowledged in the Catholic faith. And our present point is that, however strong we may think the subjective element in the Fourth Gospel, we yet cannot reject the broad fact that claims such as these were actually made by Jesus in the Ministry. Jesus indeed made no explicit statement to the effect that He is Divine, but He did make assertions such as these which we have quoted. And when reflection had had time to work upon these sayings of Jesus, the Church came unanimously to the conclusion that they involved the belief that He is God. We regard the Fourth Gospel, therefore, as corroborating our

contention that Jesus left the disciples in possession of a body of teaching which made necessary the Catholic interpretation of His Nature and Person.

But such an interpretation was not even guessed at before the Resurrection. This tremendous event lifted the thoughts of the disciples to a new plane. They recognised it as a spiritual fact with a spiritual message. They felt that Jesus was raised now into a new sphere of being. They beheld Him transfigured, spiritualised, glorified. And, above all, their whole subsequent attitude to the Resurrection shows that they regarded it as a vindication of the claims of Jesus. It had the double effect of helping them to see more clearly what those claims involved and also of assuring them that the claims were true.

Throughout the years that followed the Ascension, the Person of the exalted and glorified Jesus occupied always the central place in the thoughts of the Apostles. It was their deepest conviction that He who had companied with them during His earthly life was now exalted to the right hand of God. This conviction was based on the certainty of personal experience; for they had seen Him in the glory of His Risen Life.

The important point is that these men, who first preached the Exaltation of Jesus, were those very men who had known Him under the con-

ditions of earthly life. The whole range of experience in respect of the Humiliation and Exaltation of Jesus belonged to one and the same set of men.

Such were the witnesses who were able to hand on to the great theologians of the Apostolic band, like St. Paul and the writer to the Hebrews, the complete data upon which the Church had to work in estimating the significance of the Person and Nature of Jesus. It is of great evidential importance that the complete data were originally derived from the personal and first-hand knowledge of one set of minds: that the men who witnessed the Risen Life, and who claimed to experience the presence of the glorified Jesus, were the same men as they who had witnessed the earthly life of the Master and listened to the discourses in which He set forth His claims.

St. Paul indeed himself states that he had seen the Lord, who appeared to him in vision. But the validity of St. Paul's witness does not depend upon this vision. It is based upon the concrete fact that the data upon which he worked had been handed down to him by the Apostles themselves out of the fulness of their own personal experience and knowledge at a time when no false accretion of tradition could have come in. The Apostles drew for St. Paul their picture of Jesus, and he gradually learnt to recognise its

significance. Then at last he was able to write beneath the portrait that had been handed down to him its title: "The Image of the Invisible God."

But it was not only by pupils of the eye-witnesses of the Ministry and Risen Life of Jesus that the meaning of the data was worked out. One at least of the Apostles was himself a theologian. We have accepted the belief that the Fourth Gospel is substantially the work of St. John. On this supposition it gives us the interpretation of the Person of Jesus at which, after long years of profound meditation, an Apostle had arrived. The same data were before him as were present to the minds of the other Apostles. He had witnessed the mighty works of the Ministry; he had listened to the sayings of Jesus; he had seen the grave-clothes lying in the untenanted grave; he had witnessed the unexampled manifestations of the Risen Life; he had been present at the Ascension into heaven. Now he had brought to bear upon this tremendous experience all the power of his deeply spiritual nature. And he too had arrived at an interpretation of its meaning. He whom their hands had handled was the Word made flesh. And the Word was God.

With one consent the great Christian teachers of the Apostolic age arrive at one and the same

conclusion. They express themselves indeed in different language. They employ different metaphors to convey the transcendental doctrine that fills their minds. They do not all see equally clearly the logical outcome of the truths they teach. Some penetrate more deeply than others into the profound truths of the revelation that is in Jesus. But all alike present a doctrine which implicitly or explicitly teaches that Jesus Christ is God.

Now, in asking whether the Apostolic teachers were justified upon the data in arriving at this conclusion, we must remember that there is presented to us only a small portion of the data that were in their possession. The Apostles saw the Life of Jesus: we only read about it. Our Gospels are fragments; the earliest Gospel, as we have it, is not even complete. The Fourth Gospel, again, is not simple history, but history interpreted. As we read it we cannot say at once, "These were the data upon which the Apostolic band proceeded in arriving at their conclusion as to the Person of Christ." What we can say as to the Fourth Gospel is this: "This is the interpretation of the data at which a deeply spiritual eye-witness arrived after long and sympathetic thought. Is it not likely that his interpretation is true?"

We shall not do justice to the strength of the Christian position if we admit that the evidence



presented to us by even the fragmentary records that have come down to us of the Lord's Life and Resurrection is insufficient to warrant the Catholic interpretation of His Person. But even if this were so, we should still have the decisive fact that the Apostolic band, with the full data before them fresh in their minds, and grounded on eye-witnesses, with one consent arrived at the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus.

Our argument, moreover, will have shown that we decline to admit that the fragmentary data handed down to us, and based on assured historical certainty, are insufficient to support the Catholic conclusion. On the contrary, we maintain that the claims of Jesus, which historically are undoubted, positively demand this interpretation of His Person. These claims are unintelligible and impossible unless Jesus Christ is God.

The conclusion we have come to has been based upon a strict historical examination of the facts underlying the New Testament narrative. And for an inquirer who stands outside the Christian faith, the evidence he has to consider will be such as we have indicated. The Christian believer, however, will at once feel that we have covered but a small part of the ground. He has yet other reasons for his faith, which to the world must be unintelligible. We have said nothing, for instance, as to the work of the Holy Spirit, whose Mission it is to guide men



into all the truth. The Christian believer knows with the certainty of personal experience that the Holy Spirit does indeed so work. He recognises the providential guidance of the Holy Spirit through all the long centuries of the history of the Church. And in particular, he is certain that the Apostles were not mistaken when they believed that the Pentecostal gift had given them a permanent endowment, and that the Holy Spirit of God was guiding and inspiring them in their presentation of the gospel.

Through nineteen centuries it has been the constant belief of Christendom that the Risen and Glorified Christ has been present in His Church. In the power of this faith, a new type of character has grown up, showing a spirit of love and self-sacrifice which, wherever its influence has been felt, has transformed mankind. It is a power which is not of this world, and it is based upon sanctions which the world does not recognise. But multitudes of men and women in all ages of the Church's existence have lived lives of complete self-denial and joyful endurance of suffering in the power of their faith, and have laid down their lives in glad readiness for the sake of the Master in whom they have believed. This indeed may give, even to those who stand outside the faith of Christendom, food for thought. But to those who have learnt to believe in Jesus, it will be the

perpetual corroboration of their most holy faith. They will feel that it is incredible that the saints and heroes of Christendom, men and women who are the very salt of the earth, should have been one and all the deluded victims of a dream. To them the exalted Christ was a present reality. His power over their hearts and lives was to them the surest proof of the verity of the faith.

Such considerations as these, however, need not now be elaborated, for they lie outside the field of our present study. Our aim has been to examine the Self-revelation of Jesus in His historic manifestation in the flesh, so far as our records enable us to reproduce it, and then to trace the process by which the Apostolic band gradually unravelled His meaning. We have seen how they were led to ask who this was who made so vast a claim upon their hearts and understanding and lives. We have examined the claims He made, we have seen how by His Resurrection He vindicated the truth of His words; and as the outcome of our study we maintain that in no other way could the great central question as to the Nature and Person of Jesus have been answered than by the confession that is enshrined in the Catholic faith.



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